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NO. SEVEN

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MAGAZINE

AUGUSTTM



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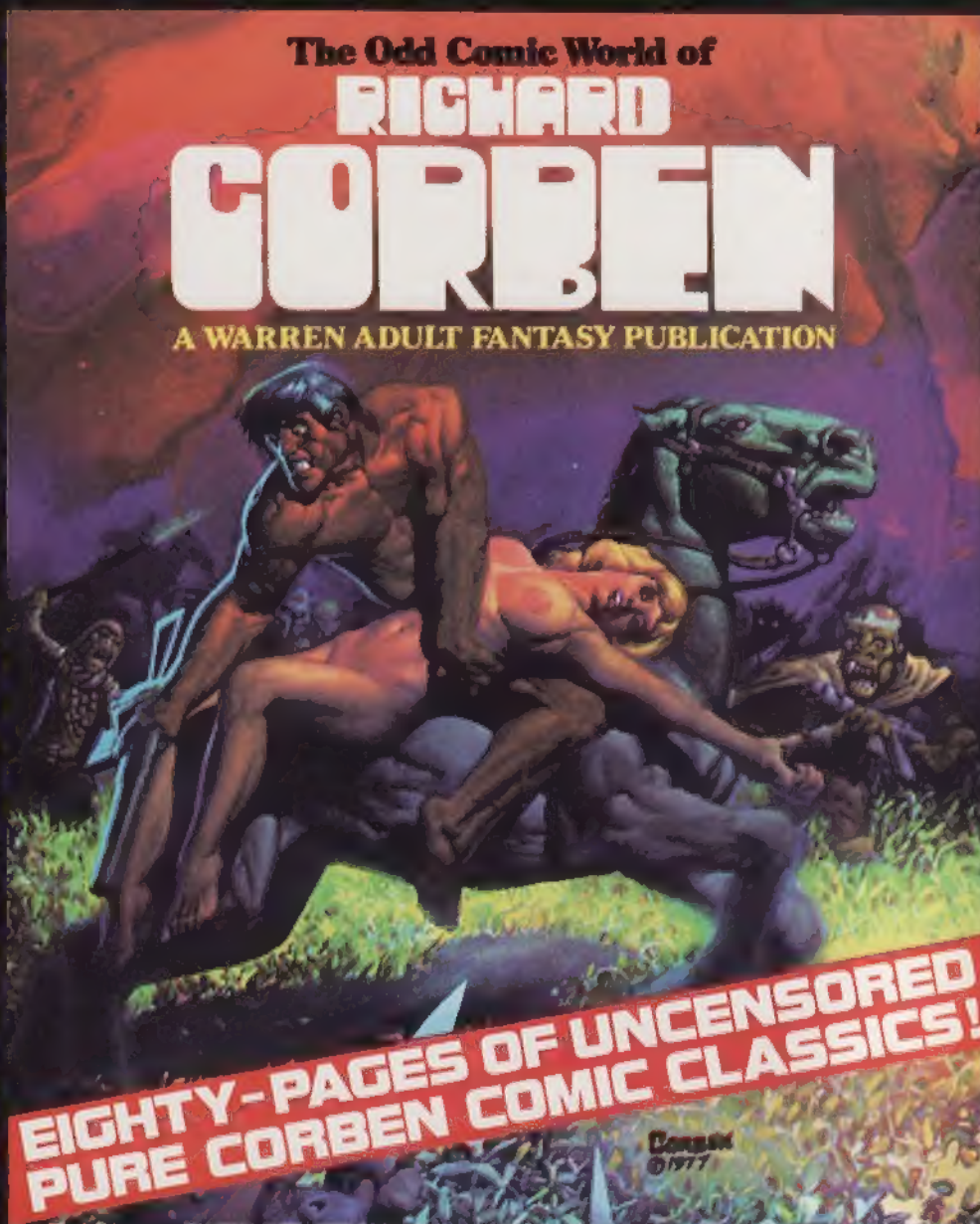
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MAGAZINE

NUMBER SEVEN AUG 1979



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CHRIS ADAMES
JAMES STENSTRUM
Assistant Editors

PATRICK WOODROFFE
Cover Illustrator

TELEPORT: 2010

6

Julie's charred, smoldering remains oozed like charcoal-broiled puss across the cabin floor of Flight 222. The hijacker had detonated his first bomb, and was ready to trigger the others unless beamed to lunar base now!



By **BUDD LEWIS** and **ALEX NINO**

FREEZE

20



The world was turning to shit. And Klaus Ulster, despite all of his wealth, was powerless to do anything about it. All Klaus could do was escape. He purchased immortality and a cryogenics chamber for a cool billion dollars!

By **BUDD LEWIS** and

KAISER WARDUKE

26

As the radioactive dust settled at the conclusion of Earth's third glorious global war, a new breed of humanoid emerged from the ashes, the likes of which had only previously been seen in Greek legends and American funny books!



By **RICH MARGOPOULOS** and **JIM JANES**

MUTANT WORLD

35



Deep beneath the earth, in a secret underground complex, a maniacal self-styled prophet runs amok, smashing vials of man-made life. Vials containing the only hope of a devastated Mutant World. The children of tomorrow!

By **JAN STRNAD** and **RICHARD CORBEN**

GHITA of ALIZARR

54

Khan-Dagon the bold was also known as Khan-Dagon the deformed! Yea, he be hung like a horse! When he thrust his mammoth manhood into Ghita, the royal concubine screamed as though the dark forces themselves were upon her!



By **FRANK THORNE**

TWILIGHT'S END

43



Zev had been on the blue planet for weeks and had still not accomplished his ominous task. But then, Zev had been pre-occupied. There was Rena, with a body so luscious, she could make a man forget that he was an alien!

By **AL REDZONE** and **RUDY NEBRES**

ZINCOR

69

Zincor had never seen a woman before. After the late great war between the sexes, Fraternization was not enthusiastically encouraged. But that did not stop Zincor, who had a physical ache which he did not quite understand!



By **GERRY BOUDREAU** and **ALEX NINO**

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incoming telemetry



TOO MUCH SEX, SIN, IMMORALITY?

The sixth issue of 1984 was the absolute best issue of the magazine published to date. There were only six stories, contrasted to upwards of nine tales in previous issues, but each was a pure gem. And the art has never looked better.

Jose Ortiz, Esteban Maroto, Alex Nino, Richard Corben, Rudy Nebres and Abel Laxamana may all take well-deserved bows. They are the elite of comic art, each a veritable genius in his own style.

Five years ago if you were to have told me that these magnificent illustrators would all be assembled in the pages of one extremely fine magazine, I would have called you a dreamer. Today, that dream is a reality, thanks to the publishing talents of Jim Warren.

JOHN CURRY
Ashland, Wash.

I enjoy your magazine with its wild stories and "dirty" words for the simple reason that there isn't anything else like it on the newsstands. I'm not a person who can be easily offended by "sex, sin and rampant immorality."

On the other hand, I'm concerned about the sort of reader you are attracting with the above-stated contents. Can it truthfully be said that no one other than myself has found "The Box" to be an enjoyable story?

TIM HEWITT
Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The first five issues of 1984 were phenomenal. But issue number six was the absolute pits!

TIM STAFFORD
Codan, Alabama

IDI BOWS OUT

You guys couldn't have timed it better! The final chapter of your *Idi Amin* series made its bow just as *Idi* himself was bowing out of the political scene in Uganda. You must've known something the rest of the world didn't.

CATHY CARSON
Wadley, Ga.

I've got it, the perfect replacement for your departed *Idi Amin* series! Call it "The Lives and Loves of The Ayatollah Khomeini!"

STEVE HOLBROOK
New York, N.Y.



SECOND GENERATION HEROES ARRIVE

Beautiful! Fantastic! Pure genius! I have never ever seen a story as inspired as "The Warhawks." And we all know where the inspiration has come from, don't we?

HOLT CUMING
Omaha, Neb.

I had read two full pages of "The Warhawks" before I realized who Warner Hawk, this luminous new comic star, really was. When realization thundered upon me, I laughed, cheered and applauded the sheer genius and the profound intestinal fortitude of *Jim Warren* for presenting such a trend-setting tale.

The second generation of comics heroes is here at last! And we have only 1984 to thank for it!

KELLY STEUBEN
Middletown, Ct.

You bastards! I don't believe that you have so blatantly ripped off one of the greatest groups of comic book heroes ever created, repackaged them under your new, more appropriate label, and actually had me cheering you all the way. That, sirs, is a comic publishing coup. All I can say is... you have balls!

You also have one of the finest new series ever pilfered.

JACK COLE
Ironton, Ohio

The Warhawks wasn't meant to be a series, Jack. But reader response to the story which appeared in issue #6 has been so positive that we are literally being forced to bring the Warhawks back. Look for them in future issues.

I've always wondered what funny book heroes do in their off-hours. Now we know, don't we? They're fucking lechers, just like the rest of us.

JOEL ADAMS
Minersville, Utah

MUTANT WORLD A RIP-OFF?

The first thing I read when I pick up a new issue of 1984 is *Rich Corben's* beautiful *Mutant World* series. It is, without a doubt, the prettiest comic magazine story ever published.

Unfortunately, that very aspect of the series brings to mind a girl I once knew. Gorgeous, but oooooie, terminally deprived in the smarts department. Like that ex-girl of mine, *Mutant World* is lusciously painted, but empty in substance.

The series seems to have no direction whatsoever. The stories aren't even stories per se, but simple incomplete incidents, devoid of plot and characterization. And the overall effect is like premature ejaculation with the aforementioned lady: It leaves me cold.

We've been treated to six episodes of *Mutant World* to date. And I still don't know where the series is going or how it intends to get there. Truth to tell, it's taken so long for the series to reach the point it is at presently, that I've lost all track of what is supposed to be going on. And I think this is pretty much the case of all *Corben's* most recent work.

It's as though he is trying only to compile the biggest graphics album possible, by turning out eight pages of art per month and stopping there, no matter at which point in the storyline it occurs.

I really think this is inconsiderate and prejudicial against those of us who have no intentions of purchasing *Corben's* big graphic spectacular when and if it is ever completed.

SUE ANN SCOTT
Whitetop, Va.

Mutant World is a well-drawn series, but I would much rather read a complete story rather than a portion thereof. Reading a small piece of an adventure somehow leaves me feeling as though I have been cheated.

GARY ESSEX
East Lynne, Mo.

Richard Corben is an excellent artist. Unfortunately, he is an extremely incoherent writer, and he has had this tendency of late, to work in conjunction with yet another author whose literary illiteracy is as flagrant as his own: *Jan Strnad*.

MARION MORGAN
Oskaloosa, Kansas

MAN VS MACHINE

I was really surprised that a Warren magazine would make such a radical departure from comics tradition. Mechanically-set type instead of hand lettering?! I never would have believed that I'd like it. But I do! I do! So when are the other Warren magazines going to follow suit and make comics reading easier on our eyes?

CAMP CHRISTIAN
Decatur, Ill.

When I opened the pages of 1984 #6 and saw the latest innovation in Warren's never-ending quest to better the comics media, I was immediately disheartened. My precious hand lettering was gone. Another pillar of comics tradition smashed forever by Jim Warren's upstart publishing conglomerate.

While it's true that I never really noticed the comics' use of hand-lettering in the past, it has become blatantly noticable by its conspicuous absence. I, for one, liked the old-fashioned, "archaic" style. But there's something to be said for machine-set type, too. It is easier to read. And, I imagine, it is less expensive than employing a full-time staff of overworked calligraphers.

JOAN RUNNELLS
Coffey, Kansas

Who gives a lingering shit what kind of type you use. Whether it's hand-lettering or machine-set, it can only complement the already-perfect stories presented in every issue of 1984.

HYMIE PISSGUT
Winfall, N.C.



REX: TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?

If I have to read one more letter of praise for Jim Stenstrum or Rex Havoc, I think I'll puke. While Stenstrum isn't a bad writer, I can only take him in small doses. Very small doses. A dose of twenty-two pages, such as "She-Who-Must-Be-Okay," his latest Rex Havoc extravaganza, is what I'd call an overdose.

KRISTEN ULEN
Pomona, Calif.

I detest Rex Havoc and its laughable "you-had-to-be-there" mentality.

Yes, maybe I did have to be there to appreciate *She, The Thing*, and *Dracula* when they were first released as motion pictures. But since I wasn't, and since I haven't, and since I will never care for horror films in the least, I just don't give a flying fuck for MAD Magazine satires like Rex Havoc! Cheap shit like this, no matter how well-written it may seem to be, just has no place in a Warren magazine.

STACY ROWELL
Moorfield, Ark.

Rex Havoc belongs in EERIE magazine. Put him there and give us a good science fiction series with lots of sucking and fucking!

DAL CRITTENDON
Fullerton, Neb.

We've seen three episodes of Rex Havoc and his 1950's-styled Ass-kickers of the Fantastic. And I say enough is enough!

While Abel Laxamana's carefully-rendered art has never looked better, I'm afraid that it is totally wasted on Jim Stenstrum's utterly stupid tales.

While the name Rex Havoc, itself, is clear genius (It's a natural for comics and should have been utilized decades ago!) the premise of the series is homogenized shit and does not belong in the pages of your innovative and groundbreaking 1984 magazine.

Monsters ... especially monsters stolen from the motion picture industry's better-forgotten archives, have never belonged in comics. Jim Warren's brilliant and innovative craftsmen are capable of much more when they simply allow their imaginations freedom to roam within the boundaries of their comic panels.

Rex Havoc's adventures are not sexy. They are not even funny. They do not in any way embrace the "sex, sin and rampantly immoral image" that 1984 has carefully cultivated. Indeed, Stenstrum's stories tend to tarnish that image and reduce 1984 to the lowly level of an imitation Marvel comic.

CHRIS MANCOS
Lebanon, Colo.

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This is Jefferson Teleport, a sprawling mass of orderly confusion. Every day, five million travelers pass through the Teleporters on their way to five million destinations.

Like the slogan says, "Teleporting is the world's safest way to travel." I'm a pilot and I've always adhered to that motto. I've handled forty thousand passengers per day, every day for the past twelve years. All without incident.

Without incident, that is, until yesterday . . . when Teleporting became the most horribly disastrous mode of travel in two hundred thousand years.

TELEPORT 2010

I'm Captain Kerry Douglass with Portaways Translines. This is my formal report and statement of resignation.

Finished your report, Kerry?

Just listening to the playback.

The only talk that matters now is already recorded on the tape machine.

Kerr . . . I need to talk to you about yesterday.



I wish you'd stick around, Kerr. Me and you've put in a lot of years together. Won't be the same with you gone.

Yeah! The investigation.

You're really leaving then, Kerr?

It's time to get out of people shuttling while I can still retain some semblance of sanity.

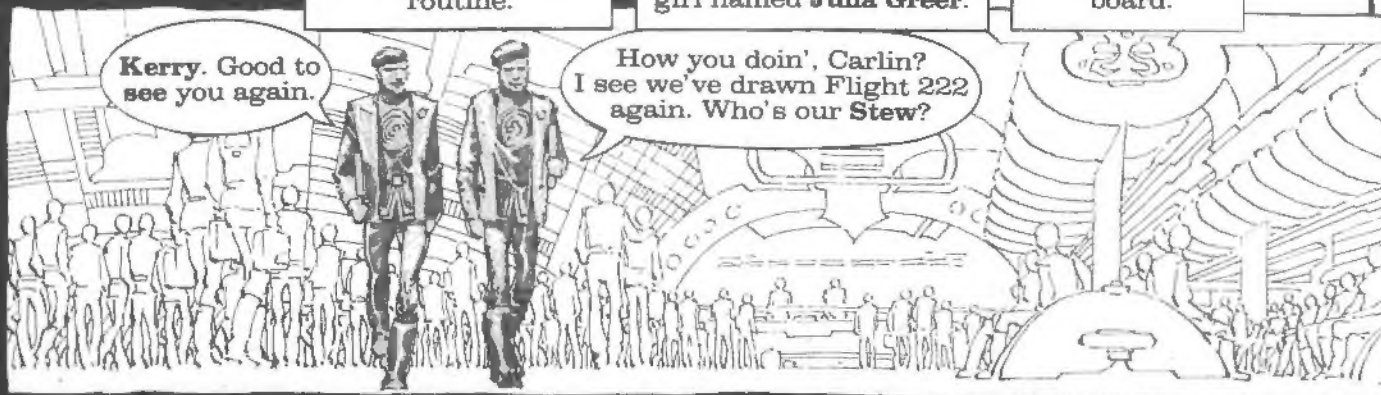
I'll see you again, Snead. At the investigation, anyway . . .!

This report goes to Teleport Authority Chief, G. L. Snead. Chief Snead to retain original copy until the formal hearing by appointed authorities.

I hate the word routine. It's such a routine word. But Tuesday, March 25th was a routine day. I checked in, logged my calculations, then reported to my cabin. Routine. Heavenly routine.

This month I was piloting a standard run. Nothing heavy. I commanded Portaways Flight 222 from Jefferson International to Washington, London, Athens and Bern. My navigator was Lt. John Carlin. My Stew, a new girl named Julia Greer.

I had no idea when I sat down in the cockpit yesterday that it would be my last flight, too. Along with every passenger on board.



Kerry. Good to see you again.

How you doin', Carlin? I see we've drawn Flight 222 again. Who's our Stew?



We've got a new one to corrupt, Ker. Name's Julia Greer.

Hey! Here she is, now. Julie... meet Captain Kerry Douglas, best goddamn pilot since Lindbergh. Dirtiest old man since De Sade.

I'm charmed, Captain Douglas.



This is Julie's first solo run.

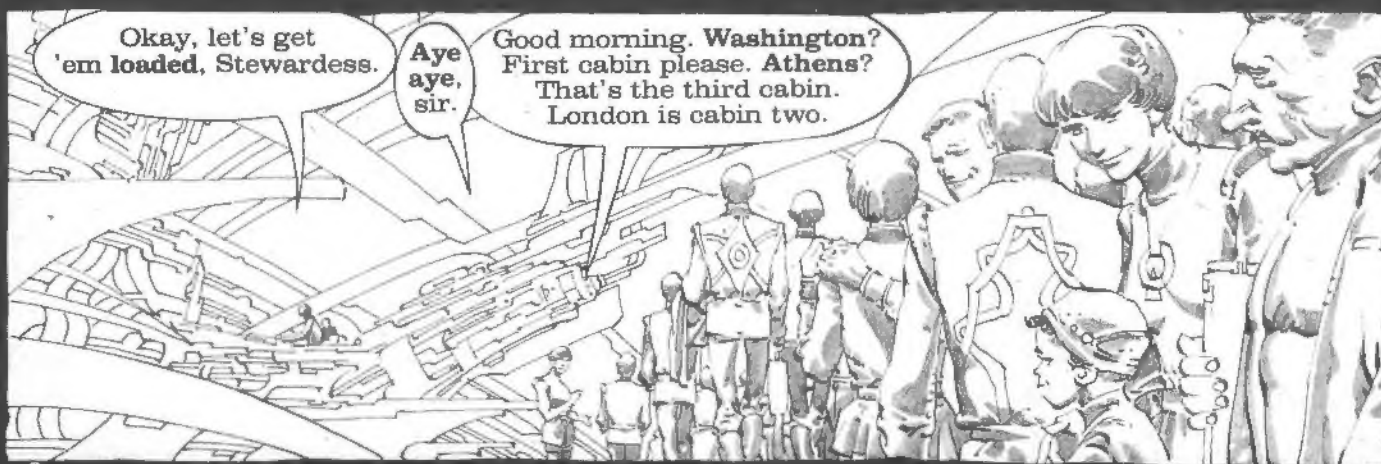
That right? Well don't you worry about a thing, Julie. You just strap 'em in, keep 'em cool... and I'll do the rest.

I can do it with my eyes closed, sir.

The way the good captain barnstorms a flight cabin, maybe keeping your eyes shut is a good idea.

Yeah. I always do. If ever I had to watch what I'm doing, I'd get sick.

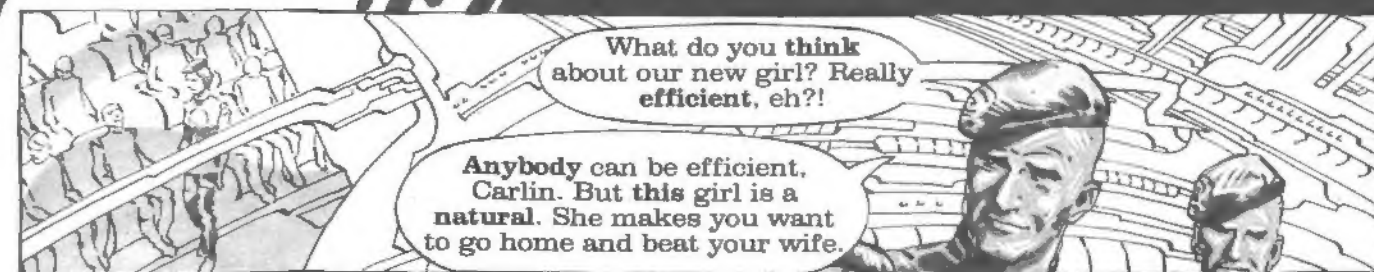
I see that I'm going to long remember my first flight with you two.



Okay, let's get 'em loaded, Stewardess.

Aye aye, sir.

Good morning. Washington? First cabin please. Athens? That's the third cabin. London is cabin two.



What do you think about our new girl? Really efficient, eh?!

Anybody can be efficient, Carlin. But this girl is a natural. She makes you want to go home and beat your wife.



Any chance of us getting our seats turned around? I'm getting a crick in my neck.

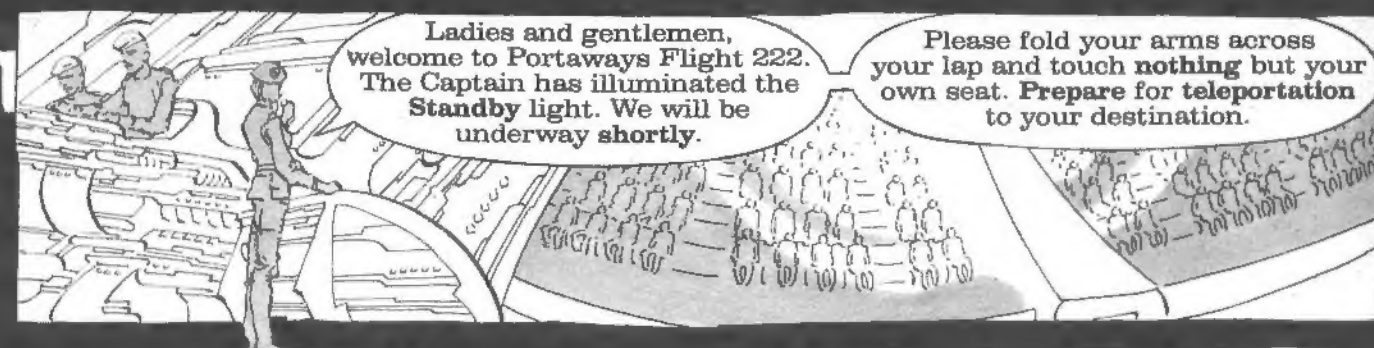


Let's get this wingless bird warmed up, boy.

You ready for readouts, sir?

Check.

Alter div-co NN9 over NN1. Fwd. pressure to standby. Computer drive ready.



Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Portaways Flight 222. The Captain has illuminated the Standby light. We will be underway shortly.

Please fold your arms across your lap and touch nothing but your own seat. Prepare for teleportation to your destination.



Going off standby.

Off standby.

Beam in on landing points.

Beamed in.



At .0031 hundred... on manual output and teleporting. Copy tower.



The first flight out was completely routine. We incurred standard teleportation. The passengers gained full molecular disruption and the teleporter beams sent them to other Flight 222 cabins in four other Teleports.



That's it, boys and girls.

Everyone's beamed out clear, Captain.

Good goin' Julie.

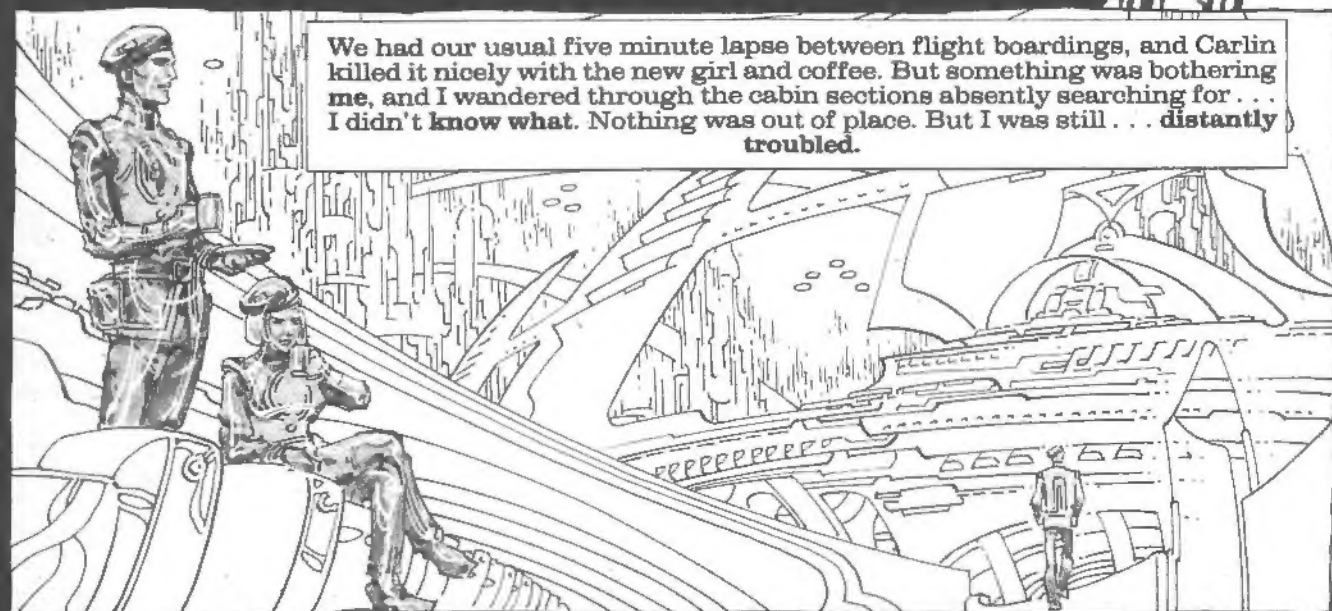


Coffee, gentlemen?

In the nick of time. Carlin, you getting a landing readout?

222Wash: Check.
222Lond: Check.
222Athn: Check.
222Bern: Check.
Perfect four point landing, sir.

Far out!



We had our usual five minute lapse between flight boardings, and Carlin killed it nicely with the new girl and coffee. But something was bothering me, and I wandered through the cabin sections absently searching for . . . I didn't know what. Nothing was out of place. But I was still . . . distantly troubled.



Something wrong, Captain?

Hmmm? No. I guess not. Everything reads out fine. Everybody got off all right.

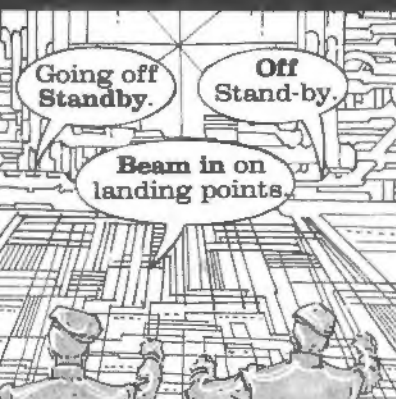
Guess I'm a little edgy today. Forget it. It's nothing.

Good morning. Washington? First cabin please.

Yes, sir. Bern is the forth cabin . . . to the rear.



Time and time again I've heard physicians order patients to travel for their health. The transporter devices were so perfect that when a passenger's molecules were reassembled after teleportation, they were put back even better than they were before they began.

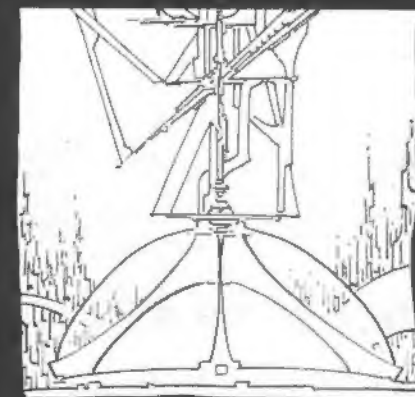


Going off Standby.

Off Stand-by.

Beam in on landing points.

To me, it was the miracle of the ages, this teleporting. It was first invented by the scientists for space research. But clever lads that we are, we soon learned how to make money with it!



I'll check him out, Kerr. What's he doing, Julie?

Shit.

He's got something in an attache case, and is putting it together. A small device.

Listen, motherfucker, I've got something here I want t'show the Captain. You tell him to get his ass back here or he's gonna have a cabin full of barbecued people!



He . . . he's got a bomb!

A bomb!? Lord help us!



Sir, I've asked you to put that device away. Perhaps you'll listen to Lt. Carlin.

Get your ass out of here, flyboy . . . or I'll rip you apart.

Okay, buddy! If you're going to cause trouble, you can move out of this cabin now!



You maniac! What are you trying to do?

Aggggh!

I've got it, sir! I've got the bomb!



Run, Julie! Get it out of here!

Help me. Somebody. Open the emergency hatch! Please!

You scumsuckin' prick. I haven't come this far to get screwed up by you. Give me that bomb, bitch!

And it was that human touch that was to make a monster out of our technological perfection. That was what had been eating on me.

Captain, I think I've just found justification for your uneasy feelings.

A man back in Cabin Four is up to something.

Stewardess Julia Greer acted all too bravely, all too foolishly. The bomb went off in her hands before she could even leave the cabin. Liquid fire bathed her . . . and half a hundred passengers . . . in an anointment of death.

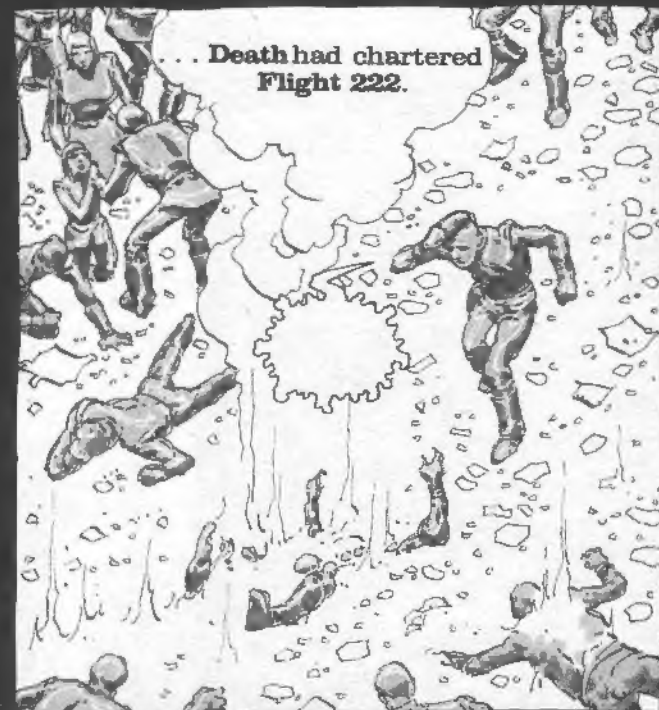


Dear Christ.

I don't know how I knew, but the instant I heard the explosion, I knew what it was.

It was that feeling of uneasy dread that had been pressing me all day. I needed no one to tell me . . .

Captain! In there! It . . . it's horrible!



... Death had chartered Flight 222.



Get everyone on fire down and smothered! Keep everyone still!

Get on that intercom and call Terminal Emergency! We need help in here!

Oh, Julie! Dear God . . . Julie!

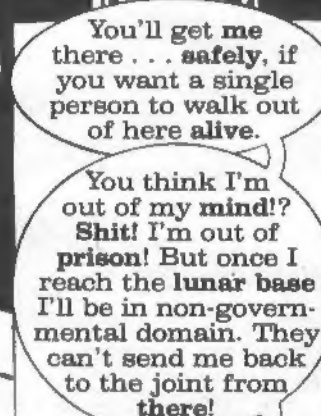


Hello!? Emergency! A bomb's gone off—! AGH!

I didn't think. I didn't realize that I was sentencing to death any man who reached for the intercom. The maniac would never allow Terminal Central to know what was going down on Flight 222.



Nobody moves! There'll be no more calls for help . . . or I'll kill everyone!



You'll get me there . . . safely, if you want a single person to walk out of here alive.

You think I'm out of my mind!? Shit! I'm out of prison! But once I reach the lunar base I'll be in non-governmental domain. They can't send me back to the joint from there!



What kind of a maniac are you? You've killed . . . mutilated innocent people . . . murdered my Stewardess! What do you want?

I want you to transport me to Rielieus!

Rielieus!? The lunar base Rielieus? You're out of your mind. I have no authority to teleport anyone to a moon base!

Suddenly from behind, the hijacker was caught off-balance by a gutsy passenger. Both men toppled to the cabin floor grappling amid the gore-splattered debris for the madman's high frequency pistol.



Got him!

Huhh!?



BWADOOM!

So you want to be a hero, eh, motherfucker! Here, hero, suck on this!

He . . . he's still got the gun! Noooooooo!

The fight was over quickly. And so were our chances of overpowering the man. We reacted too slowly, and there was nothing to do but shield our faces from the rain of blood, and pray to god that the killing would end then and there.



You bastards are all going to burn for this!



You! Fly boy! You and your fancy-pants navigator get your asses back to the cockpit. Move it!



I... I'm sorry, Julie. So sorry!

I said move! I'll take care of your girl friend... and the rest of these tourists back here.

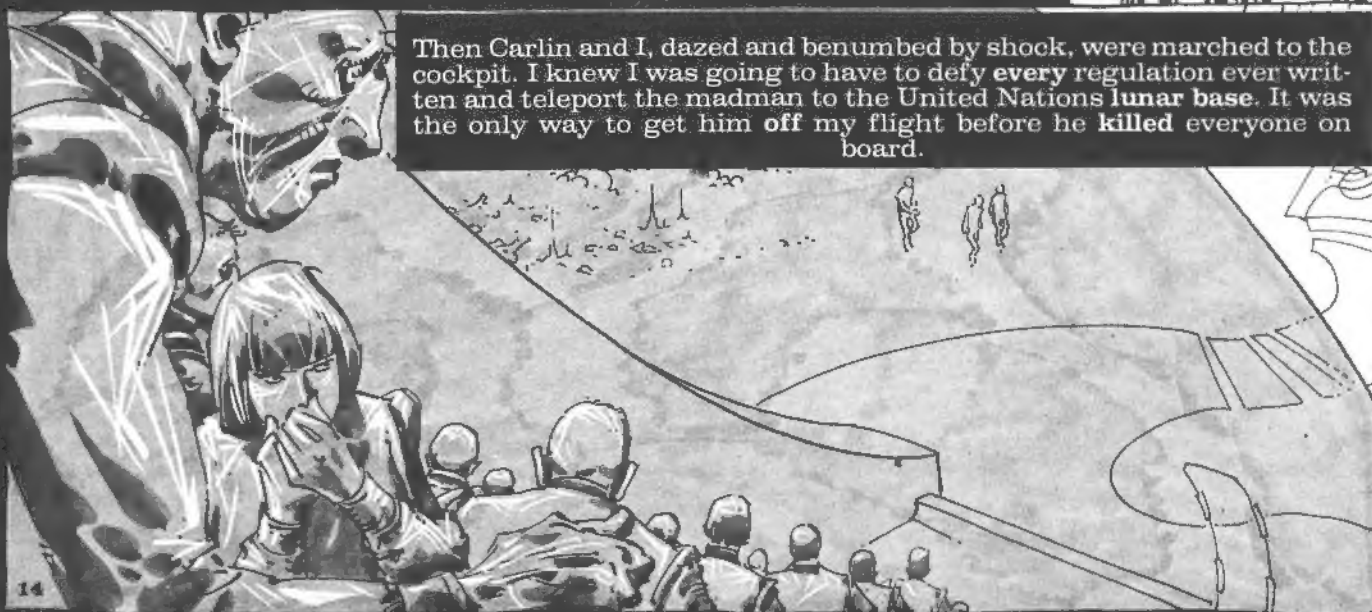


Like this...!

Nooooo!



Before we could stop him, the madman had lobbed a second bomb into the crowd of screaming people. Instantaneous flames engulfed the fourth cabin, and the retching odor of sizzling human flesh ripped through the entire section.



Then Carlin and I, dazed and benumbed by shock, were marched to the cockpit. I knew I was going to have to defy every regulation ever written and teleport the madman to the United Nations lunar base. It was the only way to get him off my flight before he killed everyone on board.



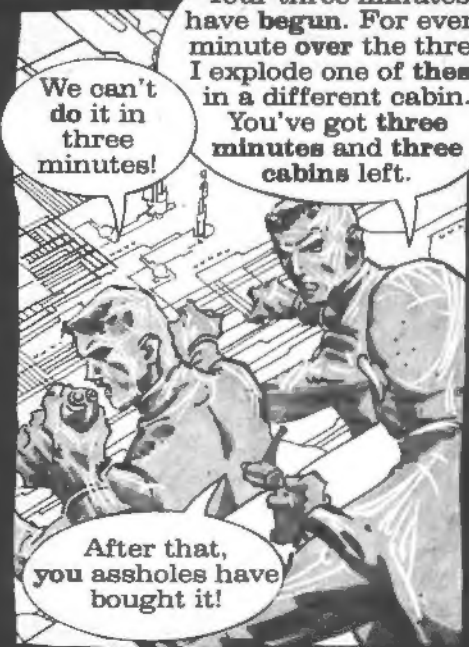
I can't do it! It's impossible! I don't even have coordinates for the lunar base.

You don't think I know something about transporter units? You can do it. Get those readouts and lock in!



It'll take half an hour. Maybe longer.

You've got three minutes to make the hookup, numb-nuts.



We can't do it in three minutes!

Your three minutes have begun. For every minute over the three I explode one of these in a different cabin. You've got three minutes and three cabins left.

After that, you assholes have bought it!



Carlin and I feverishly worked out the priority overrides on our computers. Somehow the tower control banks let the figures go through.

Two minutes, captain...!

Keep it cool, mister...!

Still... there wasn't enough time! We were getting readbacks. It was a miracle that we were getting them, but the man in charge was watching the time. And it was getting away from us all-too quickly!

One minute.

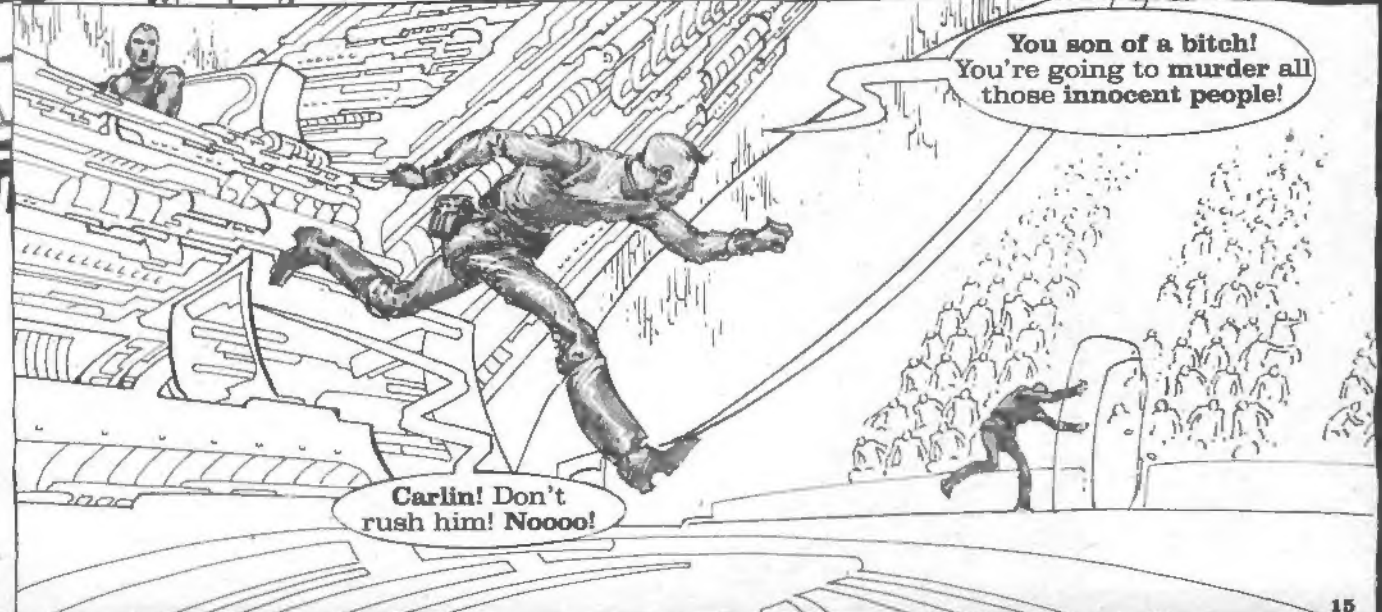
Goddamnit, man! Back off! We're locking in now... but don't push it!



You're twenty-five seconds into your passenger's time, captain.

Please. Another minute! We're almost there. Please!

The bastard knew we were locking in on Rielius, but he smiled calmly, set the fuse on the grenade and walked toward doomed cabin number three.



You son of a bitch! You're going to murder all those innocent people!

Carlin! Don't rush him! Noooo!

I'll kill you!
BOOM!

Carlin and those poor bastards trapped in the cabin never had a chance. The hijacker spun, carefully aimed his pistol, and fired once. My navigator was hurled back six feet, his intestines trailing horribly outside of his writhing body.

WHAM!

He lay on his back, moaning from the pain, when the madman tossed yet another incendiary bomb. The passengers were more fortunate than Carlin. At least their deaths were instantaneous!



My god...!
Oh, god—!

Your controls have to be locked in on something, asshole. And clearance or not, you're going to beam me there!

The space wheel! The research station between the Earth and the moon. That's where I can teleport you!

The space station is international territory.

You can't be arrested there. They will let you proceed to wherever you want to go. Just... just leave my passengers there... in one piece!

You'll be sorry if you try anything cute!

Damn you! Go! Now! I'm locking in on the wheel.

Hurry! Sit down! Strap yourself in. And for god's sake don't hurt any more of my people!

You just get us to that space station. Who gets hurt depends on you, fly boy!

May I have your attention please?

As you know, we are in the hands of a hijacker. He's already killed half the passengers on this flight, and is willing to finish the job. Please keep still, don't move and do what he says.

I am teleporting everyone to the space station orbiting Earth. If all goes well, you should be back here safely, within the hour.

Carlin!

Oh, Jesus! What have we done...?

One minute and thirty seconds into your passengers' time, Captain.

Cabin two is next!

Prepare to transport me, Captain.

All right. It's almost set. Just... just let my passengers get off!

And they do it now!

Wait. Please. Something's wrong—

The Tower won't clear me for lunar base!

Don't shit me, motherfucker. I'm in no mood for tricks.

Christ, man! What do you want from me?

No way. Shortcuts. They transport with me as hostages.

Noooo!

I don't give a damn what you think. I want you launched off my cabin just as much as you do. But I can't get clearance to the moon!

I'm locked in. But I need an extra set of hands to coordinate the locking mechanism. Before you strap in, help me!

No tricks, captain!

What do you want me to do?

Just this!

We've got exactly forty seconds to make the transport, or we have to reset the lock-in! That wheel is moving out there, man!

I had one chance to stop the bastard, and I made it count. He fought desperately... but no one was more desperate than I.



Time became distorted. I had no cognizance of even what was transpiring.



There was only one blood red thought raging through my mind . . .

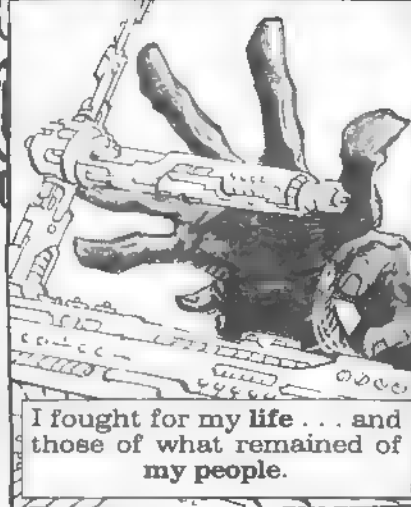


... Stop Him!

Suddenly, I knew my fingers were gagging the life out of him. He was struggling vainly to get away.



His entire concentration was on activating the transporter. Mine was on killing him.



I fought for my life . . . and those of what remained of my people.



He reached for the master switch.



He won. He had but to throw a switch. I had to murder a man.

His task proved infinitely easier.

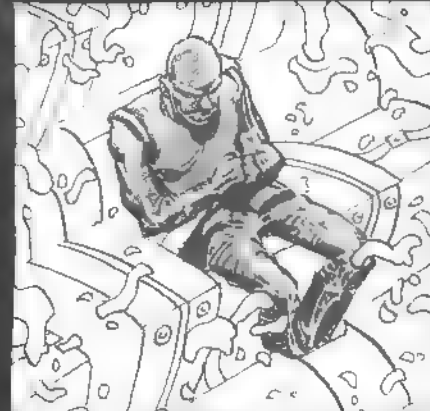


Suddenly, the lock-in device beamed on. The teleportation had begun.



A seat! Must get to a seat!

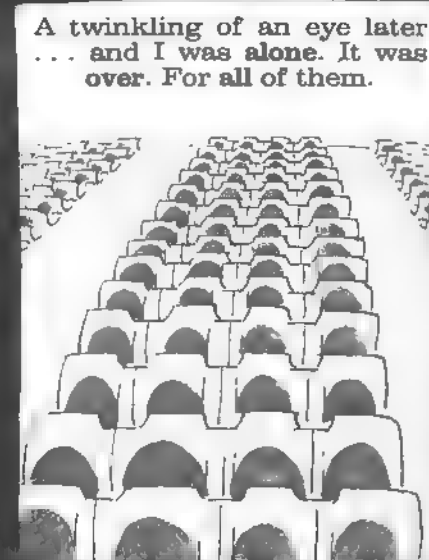
He tore free of my grip and raced insanely towards the cabin. The others were already beginning their trip into space. His had yet to begin . . . and they were leaving him behind!



A passenger has to make bodily contact with the transporter scanner situated within each seat. He found an empty seat. In time



I hammered at the control panel to stop him. To stop all of them. But I was too late! I couldn't reverse the ionic procedure once it had begun.

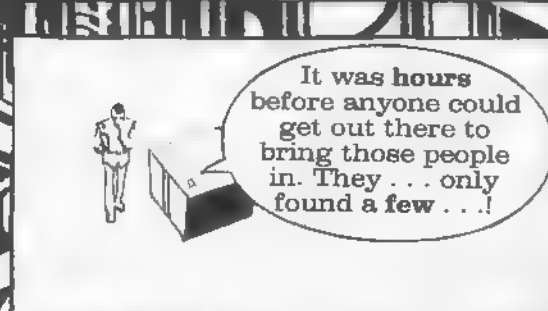


A twinkling of an eye later . . . and I was alone. It was over. For all of them.

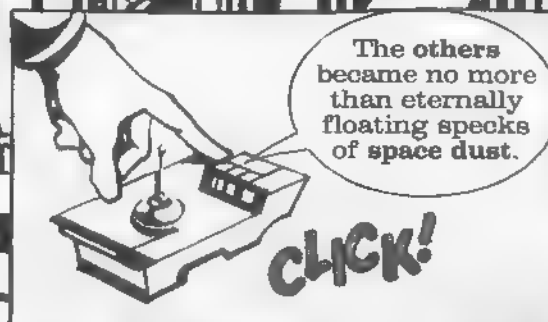


From the time I'd locked in on the massive space wheel, I had forty seconds before the wheel rotated out of target. The hijacker and I had fought for perhaps two minutes.

Every passenger aboard was beamed to a pinpoint in outer space . . . and missed the wheel by one hundred meters.



It was hours before anyone could get out there to bring those people in. They . . . only found a few . . .



The others became no more than eternally floating specks of space dust.

CLICK!



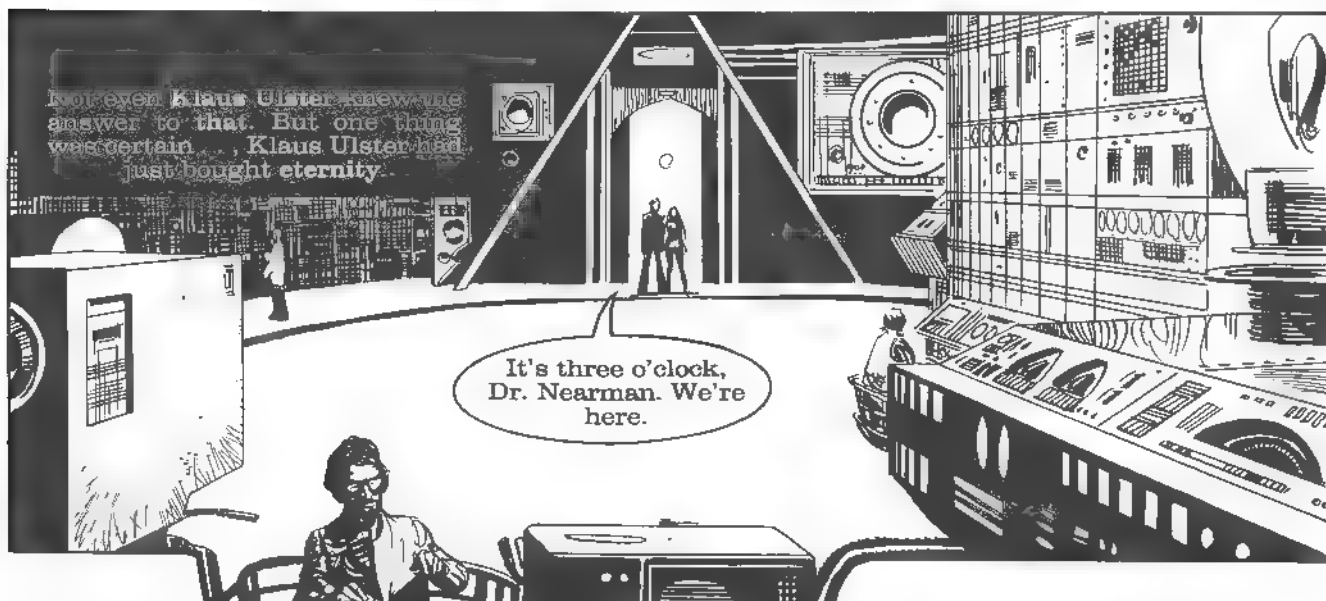
Upon review of ex-Captain Kerry Douglas' formal report of the hijacking incident aboard Flight 222, I can only advise that the court case proceed as considered previously. The charge remains: Indictment of Douglas on the charge of manslaughter and negligent homicide of all passengers aboard Flight 222. —Filed by Terminal Teleport Authority Chief, G. L. Snead.

FREEZE

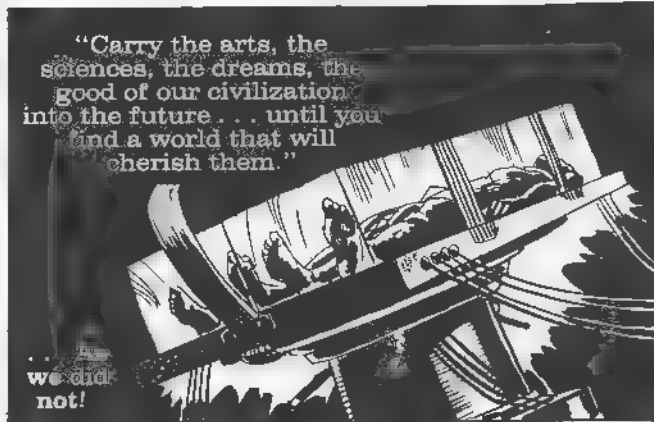
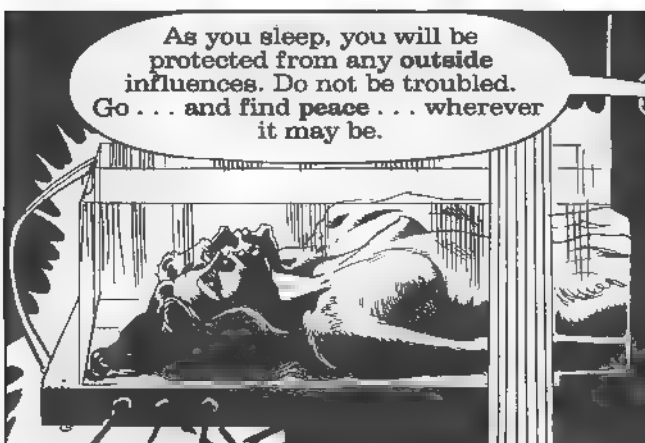
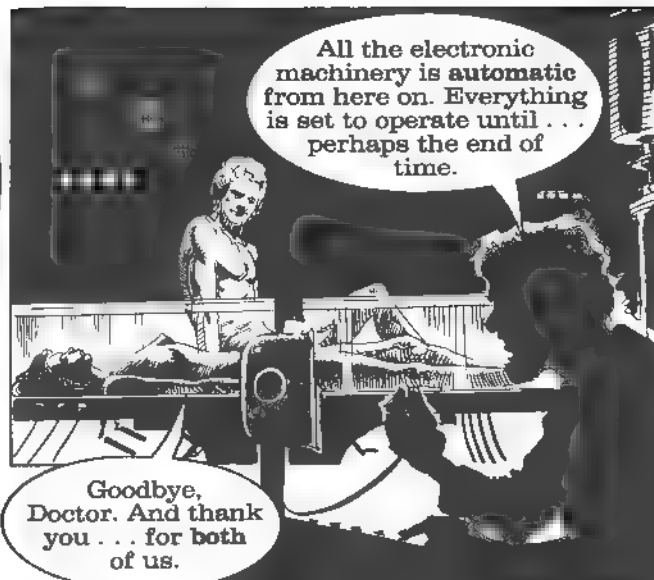
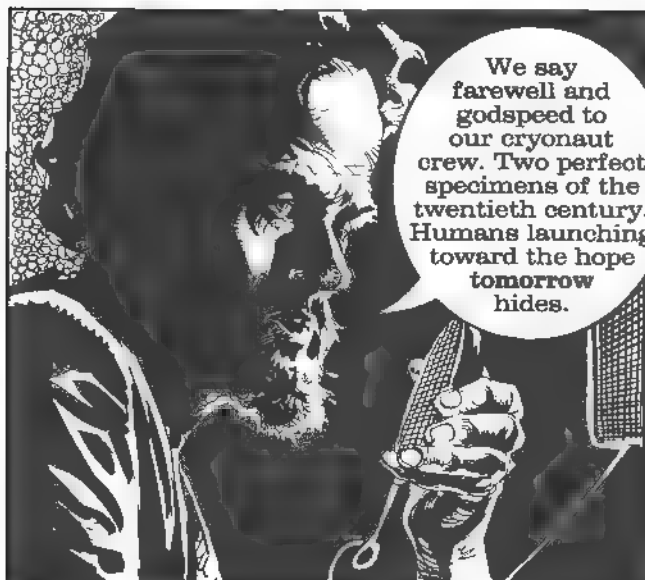
A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW!

In his time, Klaus Ulster had become a very important man. A very industrious man. And a very, very rich man.

How rich was Klaus Ulster?









Uhhh?
W-waking
up. But it's . .
too soon!



K-Klaus?
Darling, is it
time to get up
already?

I . . . I don't
think so. We
haven't been
asleep long
enough.

Something's
gone wrong!



I'll check the
equipment . . . what?
Wait a minute! This
can't be right!

That time lapse unit
reads that we've been
asleep for . . . my god!!



Jan . . . we've
slept for . . . one
hundred twenty-
seven . . . **THOUSAND**
years!! The
machinery went
crazy! We slept
too long! What
are we going
to do?

Klaus . . . it's
all right! It doesn't
matter!

We're still alive . .
and healthy. We've
beaten them, don't
you see?

As to
what we're
going to do . . .



. . . It's been a
hundred twenty-
seven thousand
years since we've
made love.

It's time we
christened our
new world.



Klaus . . . will we really find what we've been searching for here? Peace at last?

I don't know. I don't even know if the time-lapse read-outs are correct. We might have only slept a week.



I had the strangest dreams, Klaus. They went by so fast. But they frightened me.

You had dreams, too? So did I! They were terrible! I saw wars, disease, death . . .



. . . The end of the world?

How did you know that? Yes, I saw mankind finally blow the entire world out of existence . . .!

It was horrible, Klaus. I was so scared!



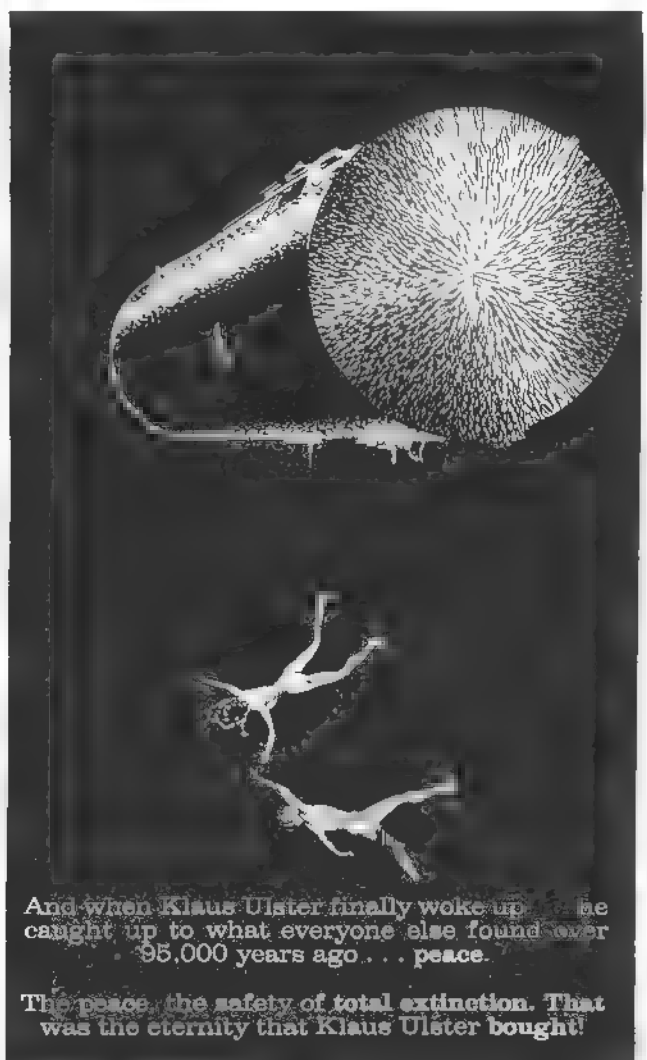
Easy, baby. It was only a dream.

Y-yes, of course. You and I are still here, aren't we?



Damned right! They can't get us anymore, Jan. That's why we escaped to the future . . . to be free of the warmakers' insanity!

And now there's time. Time for us to find peace and . . .!



Just after earth's glorious third great war, about the same time that the bright green plutonium clouds were still frolicking vivaciously over the crater-pocked valley which had once been known as the **Great Plains**, a new breed of humanoid made his inauspicious debut among the myriad of unsightly mutants which slithered, stumbled, staggered and fell out of the war-ravaged radiation zones.

Unlike many of the other survivors who had been marinated exhaustively in the plutonium-soaked atmosphere, and who found their corporeal forms melted into every conceivable shape that the human body could be twisted into (and some that it could not), this new breed of humanoid, for some inexplicable reason, found its genes altered in a manner which endowed these creatures with **strange abilities**, the like of which had only been previously seen in **Greek legends** and **American funny books**.

Those who remembered the pre-war times called this new breed of humanoid **supermen**. Truth be told, however, these overly-endowed mutants, while indeed possessing abilities far beyond those of mortal men, retained none of the **physical perfection** nor consummate **charismatic appeal** of their four-color predecessors.

KAISER WARDUKE AND THE INDISPENSABLE JASPER GEMSTONE!



Some went so far as to call the super mutes ugly, and, by the twenty-first century, had passed bills which prevented them from voting, owning property and marrying any white man's daughter. In retaliation for this niggardly treatment, the super-mutes established their own organization, **T.I.P.S., The Inter-planetary Protector's Society**, and migrated to worlds outside of Earth's immediate sphere of influence . . . to worlds where their abilities would be much more appreciated.



Well, here we are, Jas,
on wonderful Eden IV doing the Tarzan
bit, and pulling the cushiest Planet
Protector duty in the books!

It's going on three weeks
now, and the only hassle we've had so
far has been stepping in a dozen or so
oversized lizard turds!

I don't know how
you do it, Kai! I'm just
a dumb sapient pal jewel
but it seems to me that you
should have drawn one of the
outer sludge worlds, what
with the way you kept
fucking up in heroes
basic!

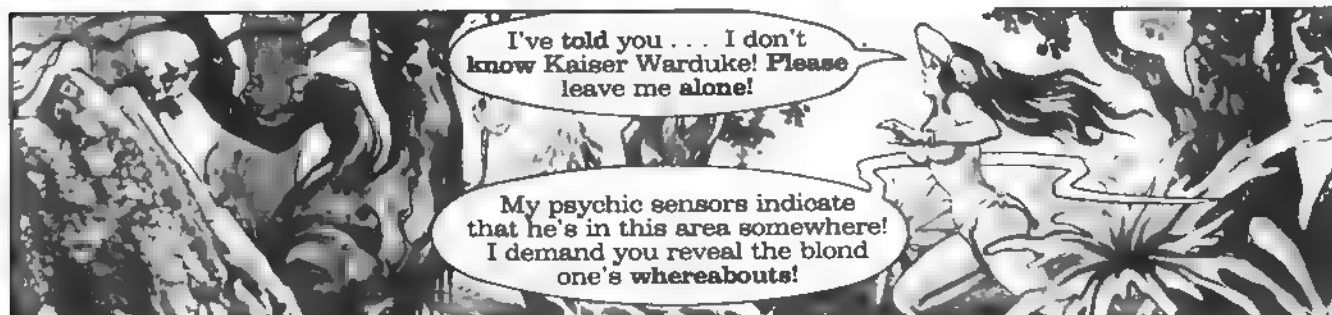
Sheeeeee-it, Jas!
Basic was a joke! All
that "up, up and away"
crap went out with hoola
hoops and pop rocks! This
is the life I was meant
for . . . and the great
mutie gods are just
lookin' over me!



Maybe all this
sunbathing is nice for
you, but I need some action!
Us sapient pais need our
exercise or we turn
to jelly!

Hmmmm! Not bad! She's
the first native specimen I've seen
with a set of jalamas that bounce
instead of flop!

Looks like you'll be
getting your wish, Jas.
There's a hot to trot twat
off the port bough!



I've told you . . . I don't
know Kaiser Warduke! Please
leave me alone!

My psychic sensors indicate
that he's in this area somewhere!
I demand you reveal the blond
one's whereabouts!



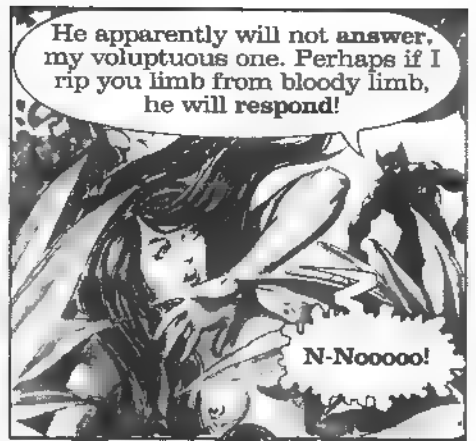
Yes, oh woman with the mammaries like melons . . . scream!

A bit louder and with more feeling! He must hear you!

Listen to me, Warduke, wherever you are! T.I.P.S. Central has made a computer error! This frontier world has not been cleared for champion protectorship!

There are bio-environmental hazards here which may prove deadly! You must depart at once! I have all the necessary paperwork in my starship.

Do you hear me, Warduke?



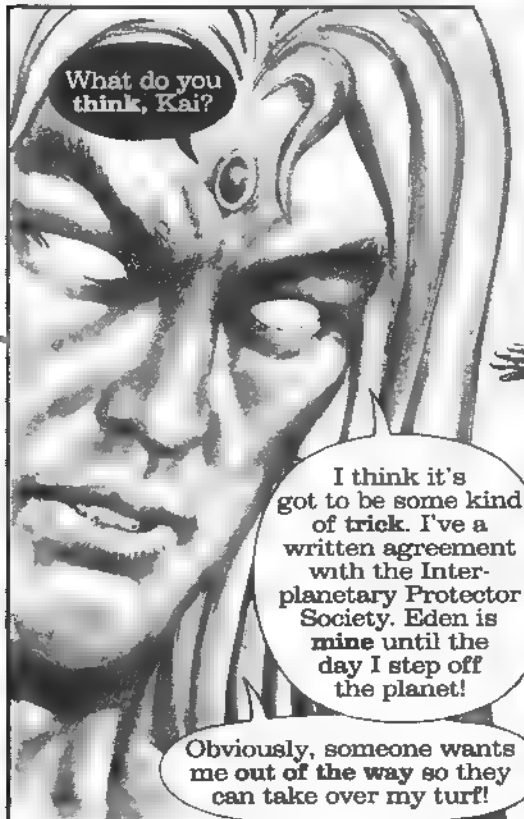
He apparently will not answer, my voluptuous one. Perhaps if I rip you limb from bloody limb, he will respond!

N-Nooooo!

I regret having to use such harsh measures. But I must contact Warduke in the most expedient manner . . . even if it means your death!



I'm warning you, maggot balls . . . keep your creepy claws off of me!



What do you think, Kai?

I think it's got to be some kind of trick. I've a written agreement with the Inter-planetary Protector Society. Eden is mine until the day I step off the planet!

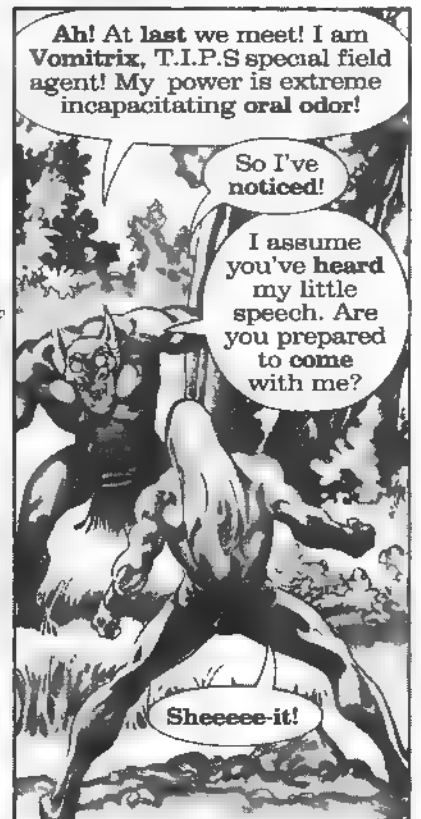
Obviously, someone wants me out of the way so they can take over my turf!



But the only way to find out is to get down there and see what ol' fish-face is up to!

Heads up, barf-breath! It's the world champ to the rescue!

Warduke!



Ah! At last we meet! I am Vomitrix, T.I.P.S. special field agent! My power is extreme incapacitating oral odor!

So I've noticed!

I assume you've heard my little speech. Are you prepared to come with me?

Shreeee-it!



H-Hey!
Fight fair! Put
me down!

Don't like
the view? I
call it Kaiser
Valley . . . my
secret head-
quarters . . .
and home!

Dream on,
scum nuts! You
couldn't lick a
paraplegic
teddy bear!

Allow me to
prove my point!

Excellent! Then
we shall settle this
like gentlemen!

I will beat the
crap out of you and drag
you back to my vessel!

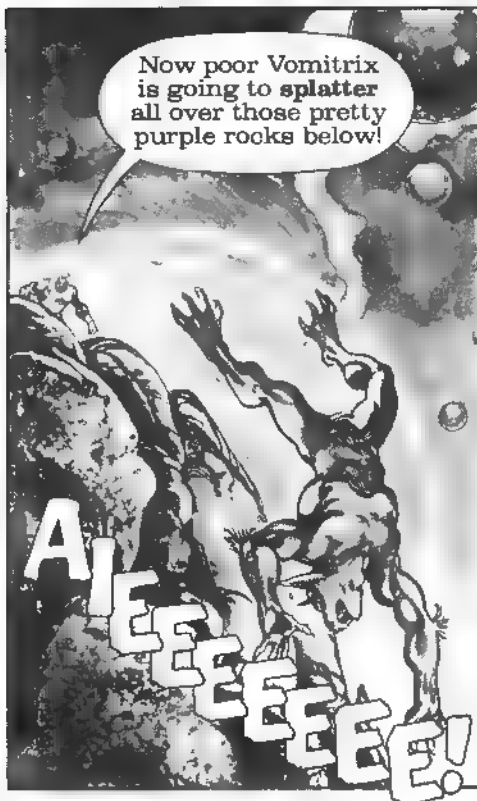


Careful
you don't get
a hernia, Kai!

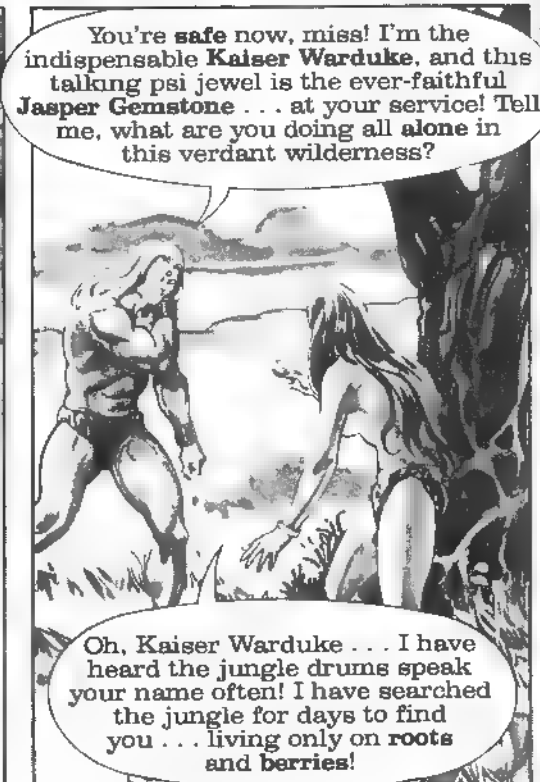
Your're
distracting
me, Jas!



Oops!
See what
I mean? I
slipped!



Now poor Vomitrix
is going to **splatter**
all over those pretty
purple rocks below!



You're **safe** now, miss! I'm the
indispensable Kaiser Warduke, and this
talking psi jewel is the ever-faithful
Jasper Gemstone . . . at your service! Tell
me, what are you doing all alone in
this verdant wilderness?

Oh, Kaiser Warduke . . . I have
heard the jungle drums speak
your name often! I have searched
the jungle for days to find
you . . . living only on roots
and berries!



I know a
root I'd like to
bury in her!

Quiet,
Jas! You
just want
me to grease
the old axle
so you can
vicariously
get your
rock off!



But this isn't the time for a seduction number. That comes later. Right now, this little lady needs my help!

Kaiser Warduke . . my . . . my name is Nymphina . . . and I need your help!

Deja Vu, Jas . what did I tell you?



Don't worry, Nymph. Whatever your troubles, you can count on Jas and Kai to see you through!

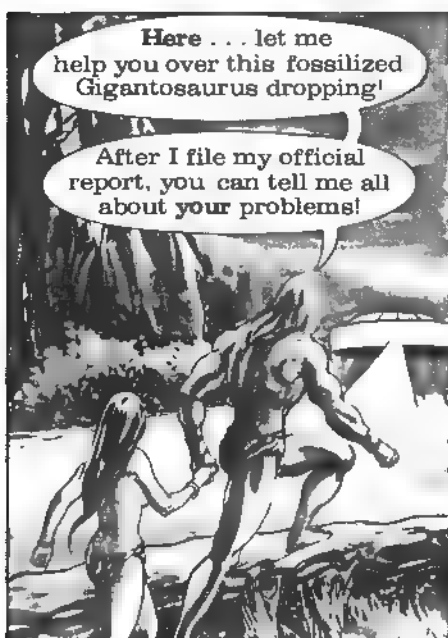
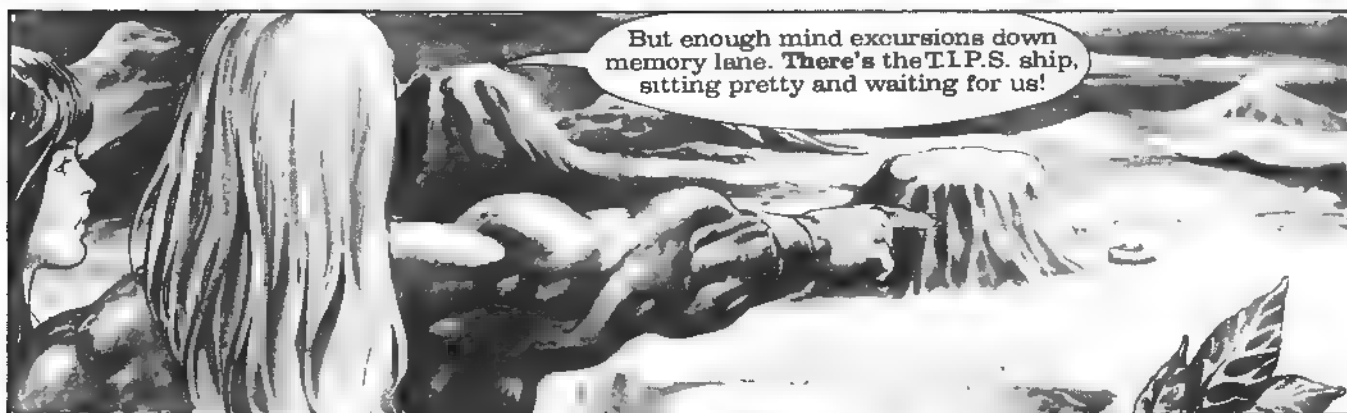
Er . . . I hate to interrupt, lover boy, but it looks like we've got more trouble headed our way!



Yes, I see it, too!

It's a T.I.P.S Command Ship! I'd recognize that second rate construction anywhere! It's probably here to investigate the incident with Vomitrix!

The last thing I need on my record is a charge of Champion brutality! There's too many bleeding heart liberals in the galaxy who might hold my violent ways against me!





So, Kaiser Warduke, at last we meet! I am Snorticus, your area representative! I can smell crime a mile away!

It is my job to see why your departure has been delayed. Did not my loyal cousin, Vomitrix, inform you of your imminent relocation?

Cousin, huh? I thought I noted a family resemblance in the ugly department!

Well, you won't be seeing much of B.O. Breath anymore! He had an accident! Tripped and fell about a thousand feet or so!



Fool! T.I.P.S. wants you to vacate the premises A.S.A.P. ... and you inject a blood feud to complicate matters!?

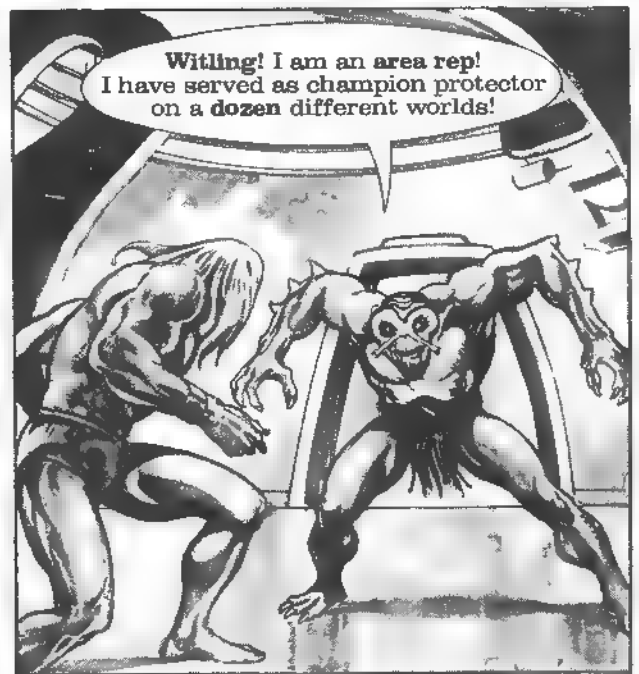
The natives eagerly await you on Odus IV! It is a direct order that you leave for there immediately!

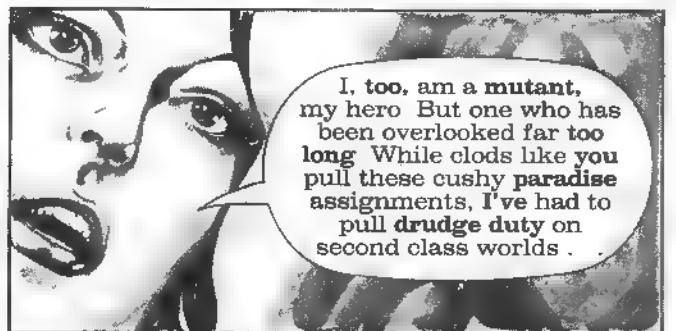
Odus IV! The cesspool of the outer galaxy?! That's like kicking me off Tahiti in exchange for Hoboken, New Jersey!

I don't know why you're in on this scam to get rid of me ... but I'm not about to go!



Oh, but I think you are!





Deep beneath the Earth, in a secret underground complex, the fanatical **Father Dove** runs amok . . . smashing vials of man-made life . . . the only hope of a devastated . . .

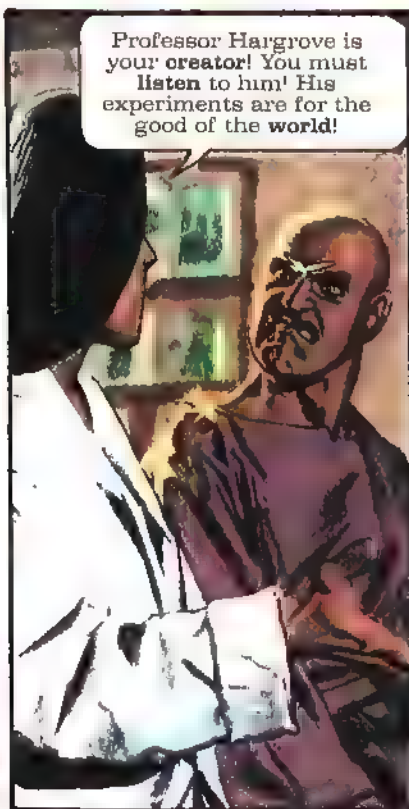
This is the devil's lair! You must be scourged for this obscenity against god!

mutant world



This lab is the last hope of mankind! If the human race is to survive, we must recover our genetic stability! We must repopulate the Earth!

Professor Hargrove is your creator! You must listen to him! His experiments are for the good of the world!



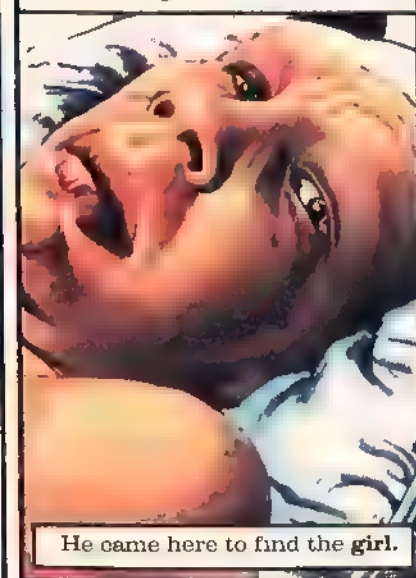




Meanwhile, in another section of the complex, a bedridden mutant struggles with single-minded determination to throw aside his thin veil of sleep . . . !



His eyes flutter, his sluggish mind tries to focus. Then he remembers His name is **Dimento** He does not belong in this strange steel bunker



He came here to find the girl.

Yes! The girl! Where can she be?







Get back! All of you!
Leave this poor bastard
alone! He's hurt!



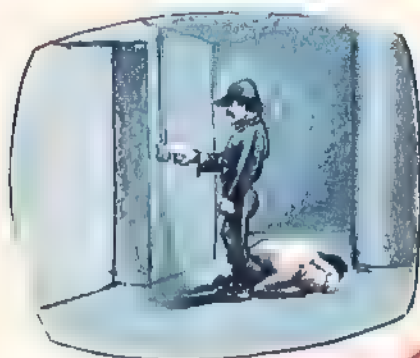
Goddamn
ignorant
brutes!



Take it easy,
big guy! You'll be
okay now!



You big dummy.
I don't know how you got
in here But we'll get
you topside in a jiffy!



Yes . . .! Let
them go,
Roscoe!



As you
wish, sir.

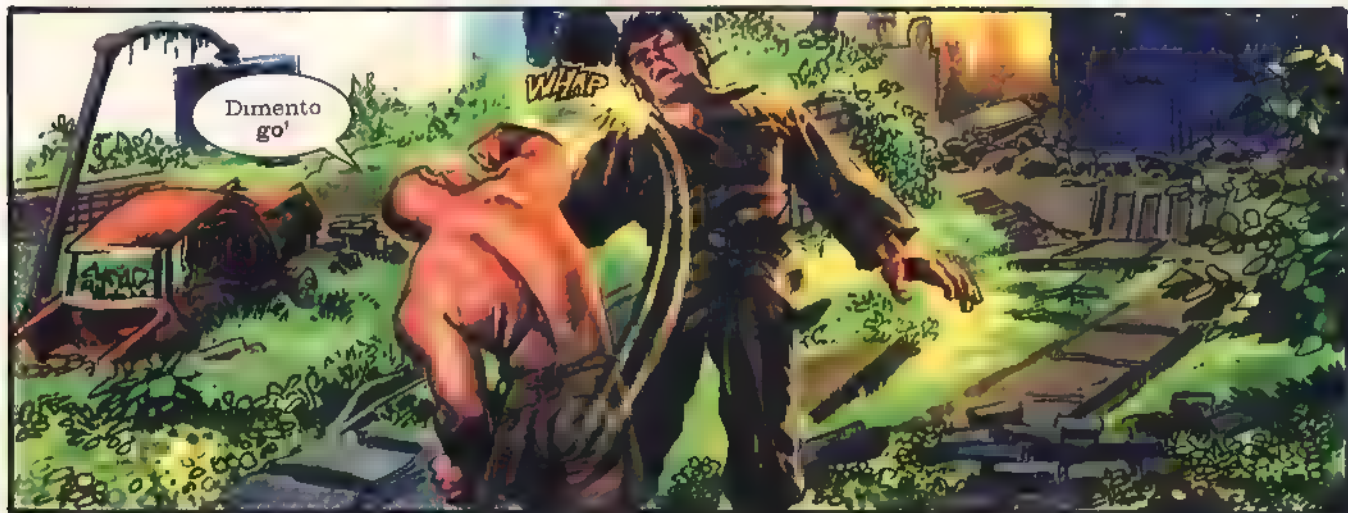
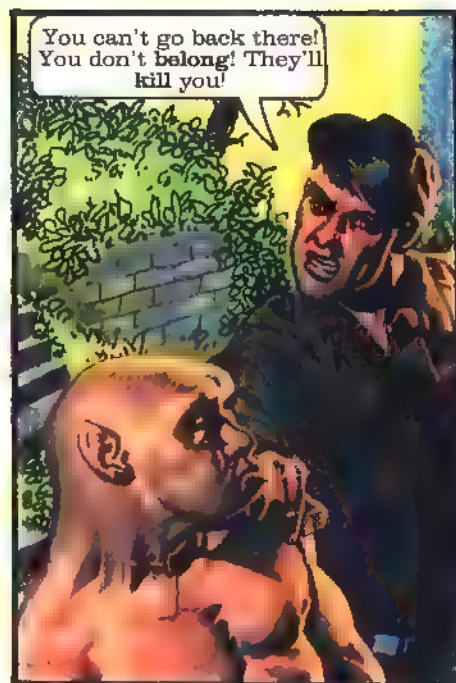
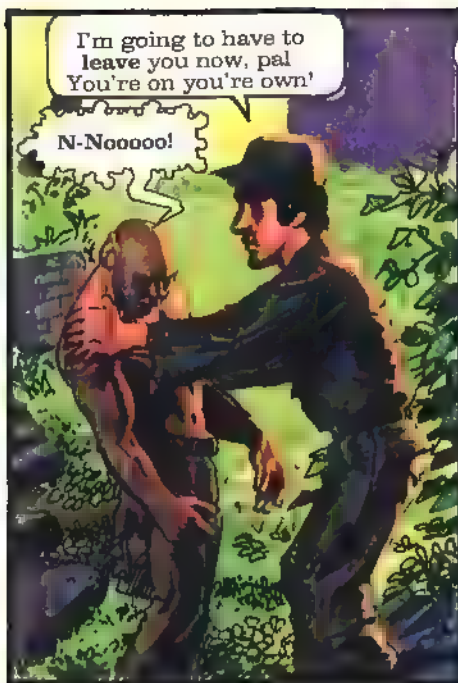


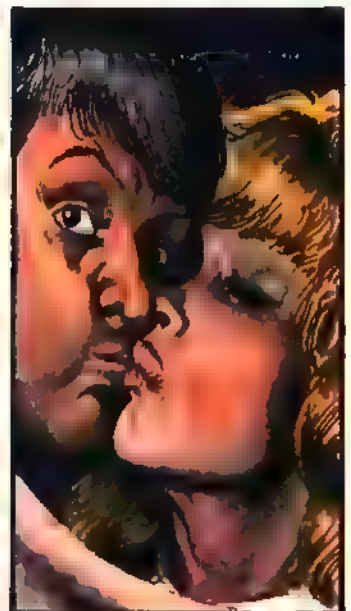
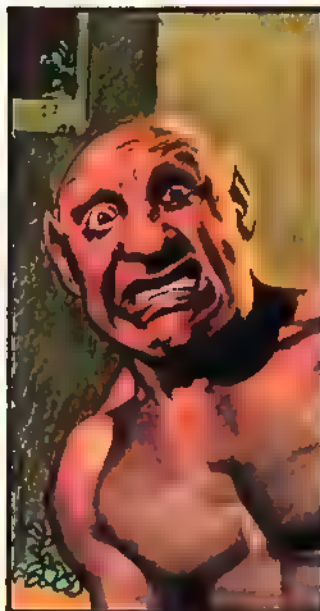
Your world,
my friend . . .!

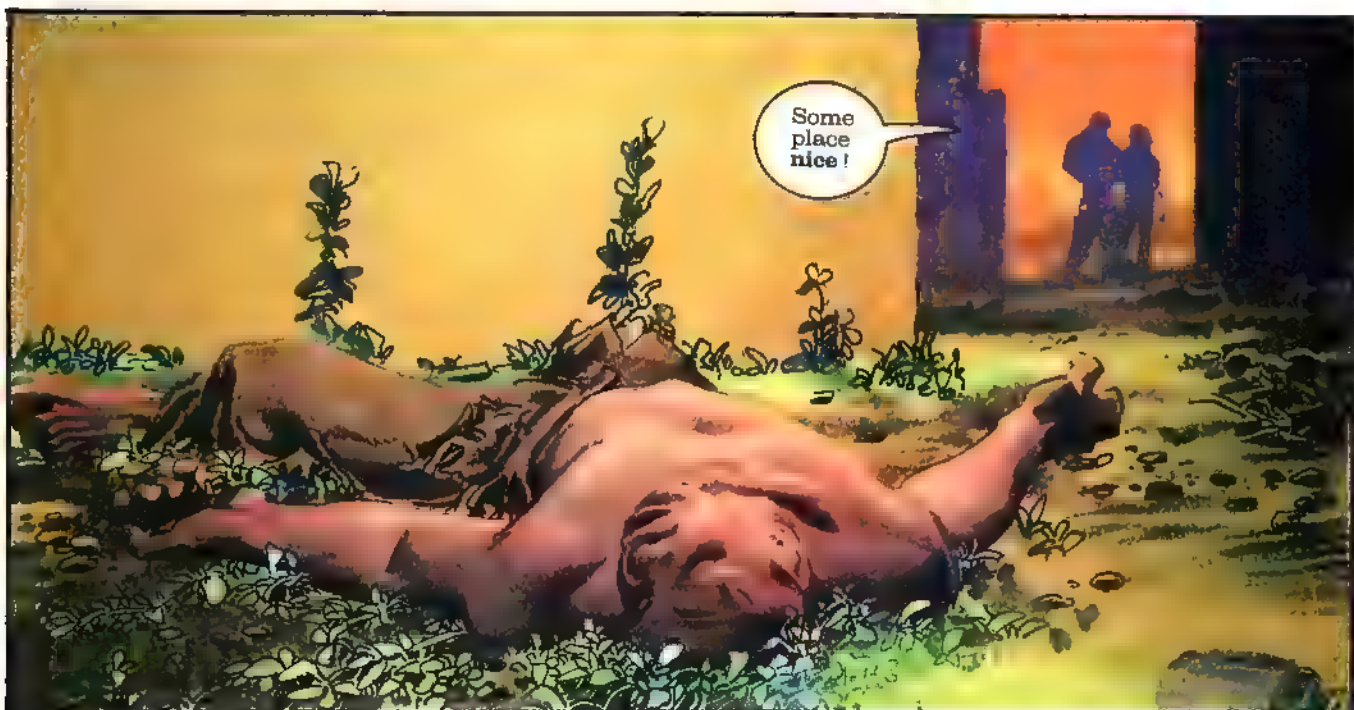
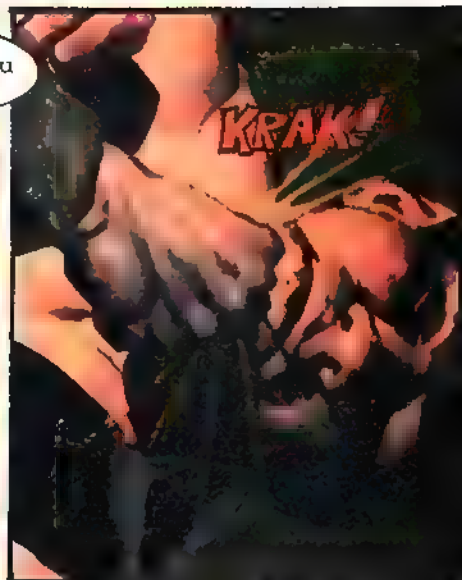
ZZZZZZZZZZZZT!




It's not much
but it's home!









Beyond the remotest galaxy, on a small blue planet nestled between the folds of space, the outworlder and the woman regard their dream-like surroundings.

The Planet: By every measure known, it is an extraordinary world. Beautiful, mystical, threatening—a place of wonders, dazzling landscapes, and stark mortality. Extraordinary too in that this world was created not by gods . . . but by men.

The Outworlder: Called Zev, he is here on what he believes is a routine survey of the planet. Though ill-trained and ill-equipped for the job, Zev finds he is taking a real interest in the place, and dutifully attends his assigned task. But that is not his real mission here. And Zev is not his real name.

The Woman: Rena, the mysterious native Zev snatched from the jaws of a tyrannosaur. Despite Zev's best efforts to break their language barrier, he is unable to learn anything about the girl. He fears she may be retarded.

The Dark Force: Unwittingly provoked by Zev's race, it reaches across the face of the Universe, annihilating all it touches. Unknown to Zev, the fate of his entire race has been placed in his hands; its survival depending solely on the outcome of his mission here, at . . .

TWILIGHT'S END!

Week 4 of planetary observation □ Without benefit of contemporary equip or supplies, subject adjusts well to primitive environment □ □ Shows inventiveness fashioning shelter/tools for himself and native female □ Clearly capable in defense against predators □ Progress excellent □ □

□ One matter of concern: Zev appears to be overly fond of the female Rena. □ As she has no place in the Final Plan, it may become necessary to dispense with her upon completion of mission □ □

□ In meantime, observation of subject continues w/o deviation from program □ □

Oh, there you are, Snitch. I've been looking for you.

Rena's cooking up something really strange. I want you to examine it . . . make sure it ain't poison.

If you must spoil the surprise, Zev, it's a meat pie with a topping of delicious fruit leaves.

Damn . . . I swear I'm beginning to understand that prehistoric gibberish of yours—!

Good lord! You just spoke in the universal tongue!

Of course I did, you imbecile! Did you imagine you were the only enlightened being on this planet?


But . . . but . . . but . . . !

But why didn't I tell you before that I could converse with you? Because I did not trust you before. I thought you might be with the throwbacks.

I still do not know your tribe, but I do know now that you can be trusted. I need you to take me home, Zev. To The Colony. Today . . . right away.

Time for explanations later. Eat now . . . you're going to need all your strength for the journey ahead.

The lady never fails to surprise me.



Before Zev has time to recover from Rena's new-found linguistics, she has provisions packed for the three-day journey back to her home. In large, undigestable portions, Zev learns from Rena that there is quite a lot more to this fascinating world than he had even surmised. Zev swallows what he can as they head northward . . . to **The Colony**.

Evidently, the population of the planet is divided into the **throwbacks** and the **enlighteneds**. Rena, an enlightened, explains that her people are the last bastion of civilization here, increasingly under attack by the brutish and uncivilized throwbacks. But who—or what—are the throwbacks, wonders Zev? For that matter, who—or what—are the enlightenedes?

Rena explains that those questions are best left to **The Colony** priests to answer. They climb without a word between them after that, lost in thought, never noticing the brilliant **silver craft** hovering above them.

Zev, at least, was headed for Rena's homeland. He had been curious about it, of course, but never did he suspect it would be an **Atlantis**—a center of **science** on this **prehistoric** world. Zev wets his lips . . . trying to think of respectable questions to ask.

So absorbed in his own thoughts is Zev, that he fails to notice the band of hostiles laying in wait, their primitive minds focused solely on the most primitive act of . . . **murder!**



The night grows cold. Zev and Rena warm by a fire as Snitch scouts the perimeter. As they hold each other close, in the fire light, Zev knows he has never felt a happy anywhere else. For the first time, he considers what it would mean to stay.

Yet, suddenly, that senses-numbing reverie is shattered.

Please, good people... could you share some food... for my family...?

Throwbacks! Snitch must have fallen asleep at his post.

No, not throwbacks, Zev. They are outlanders. Farmers who work for The Colony.

Sodbusters, eh? Couldn't have been much of a harvest this year, the way you're sniffing around for food.

Let them come, Zev. We will be safer in numbers.

The throwbacks have robbed us of everything. If you are going to The Colony, pray let us come with you.

But they are so ignorant. What power could be banding them together?

It is as I thought. The throwbacks are making organized attacks to destroy The Colony's food source.

As food is given to the outlanders, they tell Zev and Rena horrid tales of massacre at the hands of the throwbacks. Constant raids on their farms and livestock have made life in the outlands intolerable.

It is the comet! Hanging above us in the sky... That is where the evil comes from!

It's only the moon, old woman. You've nothing to fear.

No, no. It is gone now. But you will see it.

We must go to The Colony, and pray. Only with our prayers may we hope to drive off the comet and the evil that guides the throwbacks!

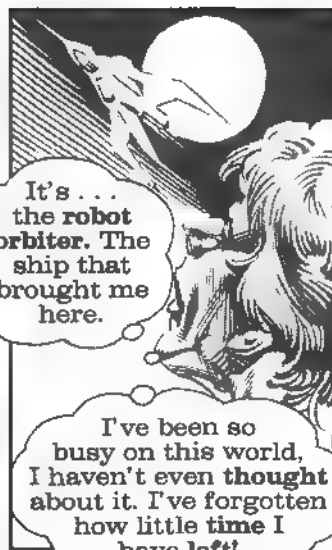
Father! See! A bird without wings!

It is not our way to judge a man's companions, my boy.



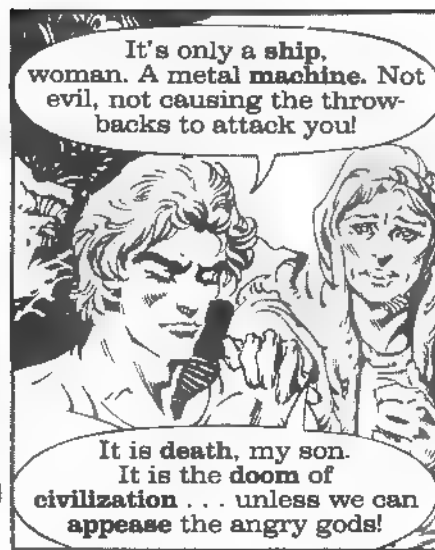
Listen . . .
I don't know
about any comet,
but if you're scared
of the throwbacks,
you can certainly
come wi— What?!

THERE!
Look now!
The comet
APPEARS!



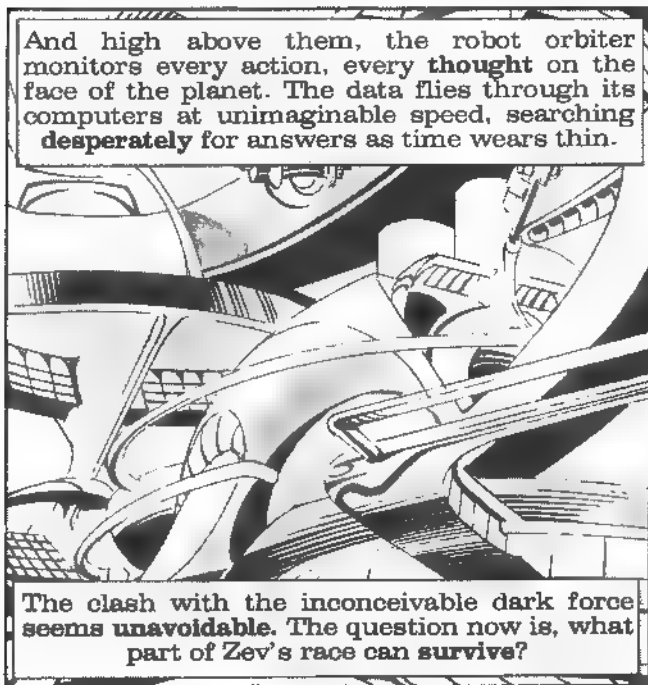
It's . . .
the robot
orbiter. The
ship that
brought me
here.

I've been so
busy on this world,
I haven't even thought
about it. I've forgotten
how little time I
have left!



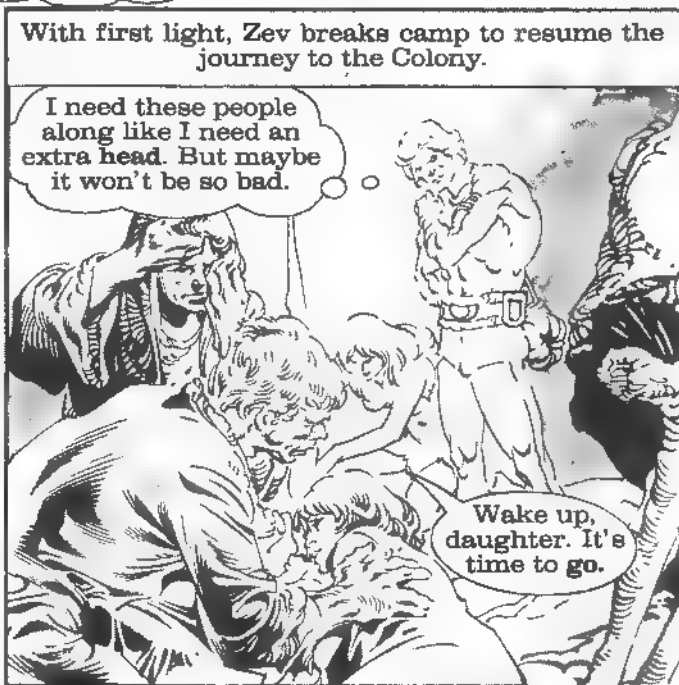
It's only a ship,
woman. A metal machine. Not
evil, not causing the throw-
backs to attack you!

It is death, my son.
It is the doom of
civilization . . . unless we can
appease the angry gods!



And high above them, the robot orbiter
monitors every action, every thought on the
face of the planet. The data flies through its
computers at unimaginable speed, searching
desperately for answers as time wears thin.

The clash with the inconceivable dark force
seems unavoidable. The question now is, what
part of Zev's race can survive?



I need these people
along like I need an
extra head. But maybe
it won't be so bad.

Wake up,
daughter. It's
time to go.



Luckily, the rest of the
journey goes chiefly
without incident, save
for the occasional am-
bush by man-eating
foliage . . .!

For the love
of Mike. Isn't
there a tree on
this entire planet
that doesn't eat
people!?



Hang on,
little sister. I'll
have you out in no time.
I'm getting real
good at this.

late on the third day, the travelers arrive safely at The Colony. The sight of the immense stone structures carved arrogantly out of the dense wilderness overwhelms Zev, who is not nearly prepared for the scale of the settlement spread before him.

This is your colony? Lord, the rent must be staggering!

My dear daughter, I rejoice in your return. Long you've been gone. But ... where is Bomo? Where is your brother?

Bomo was killed while we were trying to escape the throwbacks. This man ... Zev ... saved my life.

What is your tribe, Zev? You do not bear the features of any I recognize.

Here you will find many answers, Zev. Since the time we fled our world, many generations ago—cast out by our small-minded persecutors—we of The Colony have prided ourselves on our science and enlightenment.


Tell us, Rena. How went your mission among the savages? Did you learn anything?

Very little, I fear, father. Bomo and I infiltrated the frontier tribes, spending some weeks with them before they discovered us.

There is no doubt that someone—something—is organizing the throwbacks into revolt ...!

Bless you, my friend. You are an honored guest here. Come ... all of you ... let us celebrate your safe arrival.

My tribe is ... not from around here. I'm a traveler—an interested observer. I'm here because I was curious to see Rena's homeland. I have many questions.



The savages want nothing of civilization. Try as we may to bring enlightenment to their dim brains, they still regard us as enemies.

I say! What... what unholy thing is that?

That's a Snitch-Scope, sir... kind of a spy in the sky. I guess I can speak freely with you, being that you are obviously men of science.

You are from the comet? Our ancestors came upon a comet. Perhaps you come from the same place?

Oh, I hardly think so, sir.


Snitch and I are from that "comet," as everybody's been calling it. We, too, come from another planet, here to learn the ways of your world.

Perhaps... perhaps you were even sent here by our persecutors to spy on us! Perhaps you are the devil who is causing the savages to destroy us!!

My eyes see clearly now! The traitor is in our very midst! Guards, seize the outworlder!

No, father! Not this man!

WHAT IN THE BLOODY BLUE BLAZES...!




Snitch?
You on this rail-
road with me?

Never fear,
Zev. We'll get
out of this ...
somehow.

He has used
you to get **inside** The
Colony. Do you not see it? I'm
sorry, Rena ... but that is
my final decision.

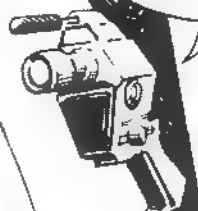
But father ...
to **kill**
him ... !?



Well, ain't this
a **fine** pickle? Just
when you learn the game,
and you think you're winning,
somebody changes
the rules!


I must remind
you, Zev, that you
volunteered for this
assignment. You knew
there would be risks.

Well, goddammit,
now I **UN**volunteer.

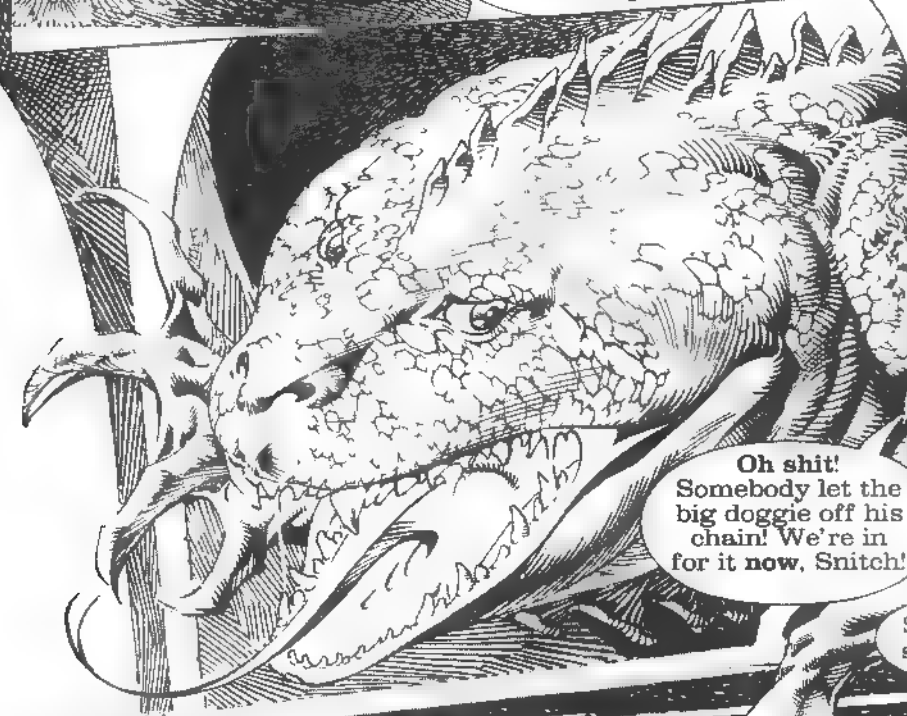


Science and
enlightenment, my ass.
Those are just a bunch of
damn crazy **missionaries**,
who've forgotten what they
came here for. Little wonder
the savages want them
off their planet.

GROWRR!




Snitch?
Do you ... hear
what I hear?



Oh shit!
Somebody let the
big doggie off his
chain! We're in
for it **now**, Snitch!

Snitch?
snitch?!



Right behind
you, Observer One.
Don't move . . . or
I'm liable to cut
your hands off.

You're loose.
Zev! HIT IT!

Way ahead
of you, little
buddy!

Oh balls!
The big dogie
is staying right
on my ass! Why
has everything
gotta be so damn
difficult?

By the Seven
Hollies, the outworlder
has unleashed the
terrible one upon us!

The
outworlder
is mad! The
creature will
kill us all!

The Colony explodes in blind panic, stampeding, crushing themselves as they pile into the exits. The monster could not have asked for a more convenient meal.



Taking a more difficult course out, but a far safer one, Zev bails out of a window, scaling down the cliff. Snitch follows, but Rena is lost in the shuffle.



Zev resists the urge to go back after her, knowing that if she can survive the trample, she will know where to find him.

But a week later, Rena still has not returned to the house she and Zev have constructed.



Well, Zev, you courageous hero, you got her back to The Colony.

Now, how the hell are you going to get her OUT?!

TO BE CONTINUED

GHITA OF ALIZARR

BY FRANK THORNE



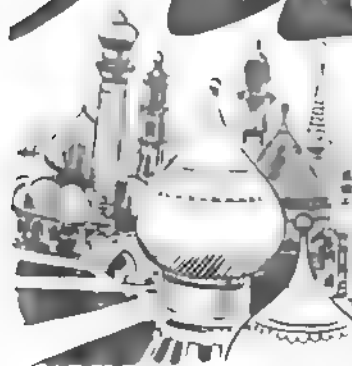
She came from the streets of Alizarr to become the King's favorite in a kingdom that flourished ten thousand years before the birth of Christ. Transformed by a savage act of barbarism, Ghita became the match for any man, and the liberator of Alizarr, sacred city of the goddess Tamara.

ALIZARR


—capital of the Khallan empire, crest jewel among the many cities of the Antediluvian world.

Alizarr . . . at the crossroads of the trade routes from Nephys and the fertile valleys of Baal-Zarra

Alizarr host to men of ambition and treachery, and women of strange skills and desires



Author and Illustrator: FRANK THORNE

A detailed black and white illustration of a battle scene. In the foreground, a troll with a large, pointed nose and a fierce expression is on the left, while a soldier in a helmet with a plume is on the right. They are surrounded by other soldiers and trolls, some on horseback. The background shows a city with domes and a large, ornate structure. The scene is filled with action, with weapons like swords and spears visible.

Perhaps it is fitting that this crown city of a profane goddess should be threatened by the Trollian hoardes from the north. The invaders have hammered on the walls of Alizarr since the crescent moon grew full. The citizens of the eternal city pray to Tammuz as the army of King Khalia does battle with the sub-human scourge.

The splendor that was your city will be no more, oh Tammuz. What then? What of your worshippers and your women? Your king? And what of your knives and wizards?

In the royal bedchamber of the palace, Ghita, King Khalia's favorite, enjoys a turn with an old friend, Thenef, the court wizard. "What of it," she muses. "Let the Troll armies run through the city. They are welcome to it. I know the streets and alleys well. I'll wager the sisterhood is at plying their trade even as the walls of the city are covered with Trollish infantry. I would be doing the same were it not for the chance of pleasing Khalia on a night in the whore's quarters."

In fact, Thenef, the sisters have told me that Trolls might make satisfactory lovers in spite of their coarse skin.

Aye, I'd expect they would try it anyway. They soon may have the opportunity if Khalia fails to stop the siege.

Ghita and Thenef at a bit of mischief again. So it had been since the day they met at the Urdian Theaterdome. The old magician had fooled all of Alizarr with his trickery. Even Khalia thought him to be a true sorcerer.



No fear, my humbug. The King will save us all from Trollian rule.

Even so, bedding with a Troll couldn't be much worse than bedding a wizard sot with ginmead.

Honors are being heaped upon me in my old age.



Come now, Thenef, you aren't that old. You may be inept at sorcery, but you are a considerate lover.

Soon Khalia will return from battle and I'll take my share of heroic tumbumping. Our king becomes a stallion when flushed with victory.

That may be awhile in coming. By the looks of things, the waning moon will see all of Alizarr praising Nergal's name.



Nergal. The image of the troll god flashes through Ghita's mind. "The ugliest deity since Baal," she claims. "His icon looks like a squat, bloated toad with a queer look about him. I'd judge he's missing a jung, or mayhap has none at all ... in which case Nergal would be a goddess!"

As a small girl, Ghita played with the trollish offspring along the

riverbanks outside the walls of Alizarr.

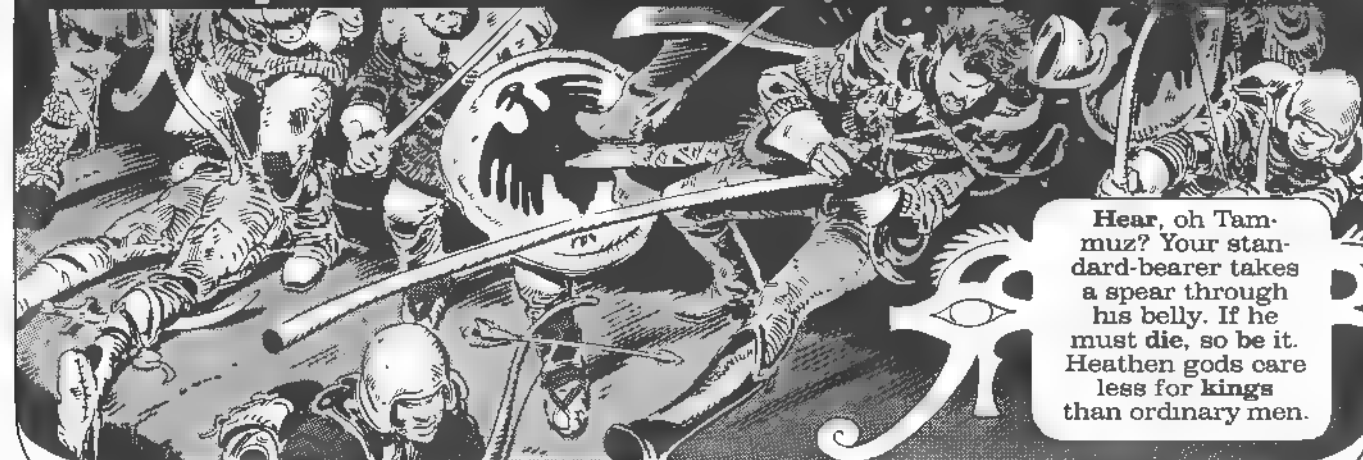
In those days it was safe to follow the river's course into the Trollands. The trollish children talked of the day that Nergal would be worshipped in every city within reach of the expanding Troll armies.

"Tammuz or Nergal, what's the difference, Thenef?" snorts Ghita.

"The priests of both are the richest and fattest swine in either land."



Even as Ghita speaks a trollish lance tears into the midsection of King Khalia as he directs the defense of his city from its high walls.



Hear, oh Tammuz? Your standard-bearer takes a spear through his belly. If he must die, so be it. Heathen gods care less for kings than ordinary men.

Ghita carefully opens the antechamber door and the two step out into the corridor. "Just like the old days, eh Thenef?" Ghita muses as they move toward the eating saloon. "Still doing everything on the sly. But picking pockets of noblemen. Baalzarra is a far cry from tum-bumping in the royal suite while the King is at his warbusiness. Still, the chance of being caught adds the spice to either game."

The lords of Baalzarra could spare the coin . . . just as Khalia's stock of mistresses is ample for the sharing of one.



Thenef! Ghita! Khalia lies mortally wounded in the armory! He wishes you comes to his side!

Word of this will send Khalia's troops running for the hills of Azza!

Ah, little pigeon, do I detect a sudden interest in affairs of state?



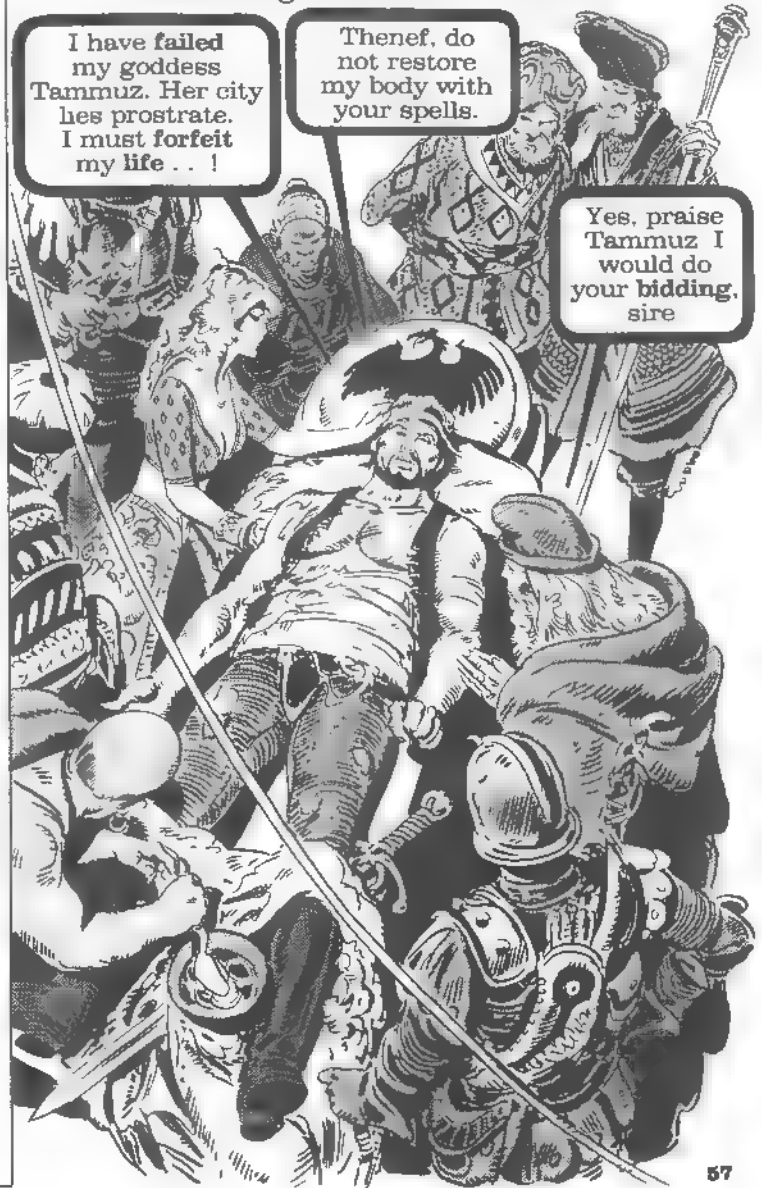
She does not answer Thenef's query, and he notices that Ghita, the King's street-wise courtesan, is beginning to show some concern for her fate, if not the destiny of Alizarr. Thenef speaks as they rush toward the armory. "Trollish emperors are colicose, and wizards are considered enemies of Nergal. We'll both be back to picking pockets by new moon's time."

Khalia lay upon a long table in the weapons room at the base of Ravelin wall. The King's generals and chancellors have begun to arrive as the dark spectre of death and devouring Trollhoardes loom over all.

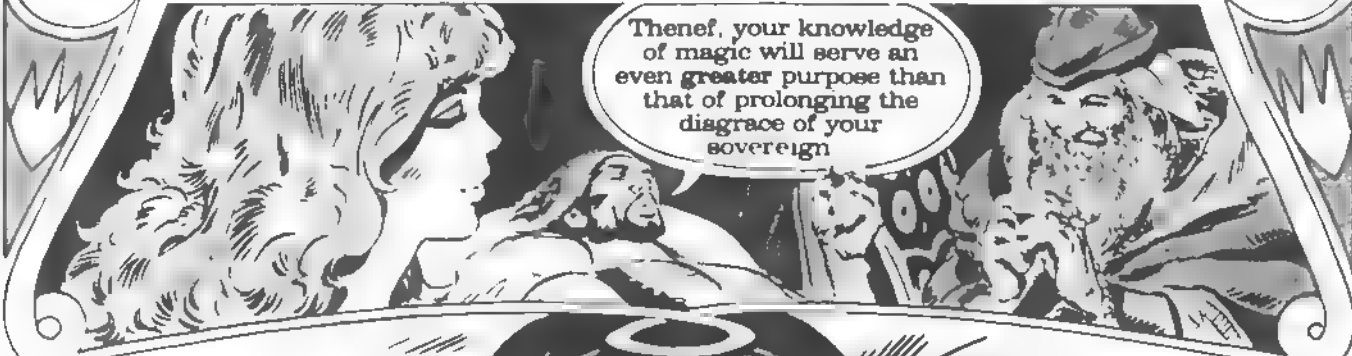
I have failed my goddess Tammuz. Her city lies prostrate. I must forfeit my life . . . !

Thenef, do not restore my body through your spells.


Yes, praise Tammuz I would do your bidding, sire



Ghita catches Thenef's eye. She winks at him. the old faker has managed to pull it off right to the end. Khalia will die believing he has had a true magician living in his wizard's tower. Poor Khalia, had your purse been stolen. Thenef's hand could have restored it, for likely it would have been him that was the thief.




Thenef, your knowledge of magic will serve an even greater purpose than that of prolonging the disgrace of your sovereign



The defense of Ahzart must have strong leadership


There is only one who can save the temples from desecration . . .

Khan-Dagon!



He turned back the ravaging armies of Zephyran. It is well documented

Khan-Dagon?



He was a brilliant general . . . a savage. A master of the sword

But, sire! He was slain in the full flower of his manhood, upon the battlements of this city. His mummified corpse lies in the burial vaults beneath the palace!

I am fully aware of Khan-Dagon's fate.

Thenef, you with your magic will restore life to the body of Khan-Dagon.

Khan-Dagon will lead us to victory!

Come, Thenef . . . come, Ghita.

Ghanil, Kebz . . . carry me to the catacombs. Come, Locknor, Ento, Azotus. Haste, we have little time.



Unhappy Thenef. Farewell, shrines of Tammuz. All is lost. The wizard yearns for a swash of ginmead. Perhaps making ginmead disappear is his only trick after all.

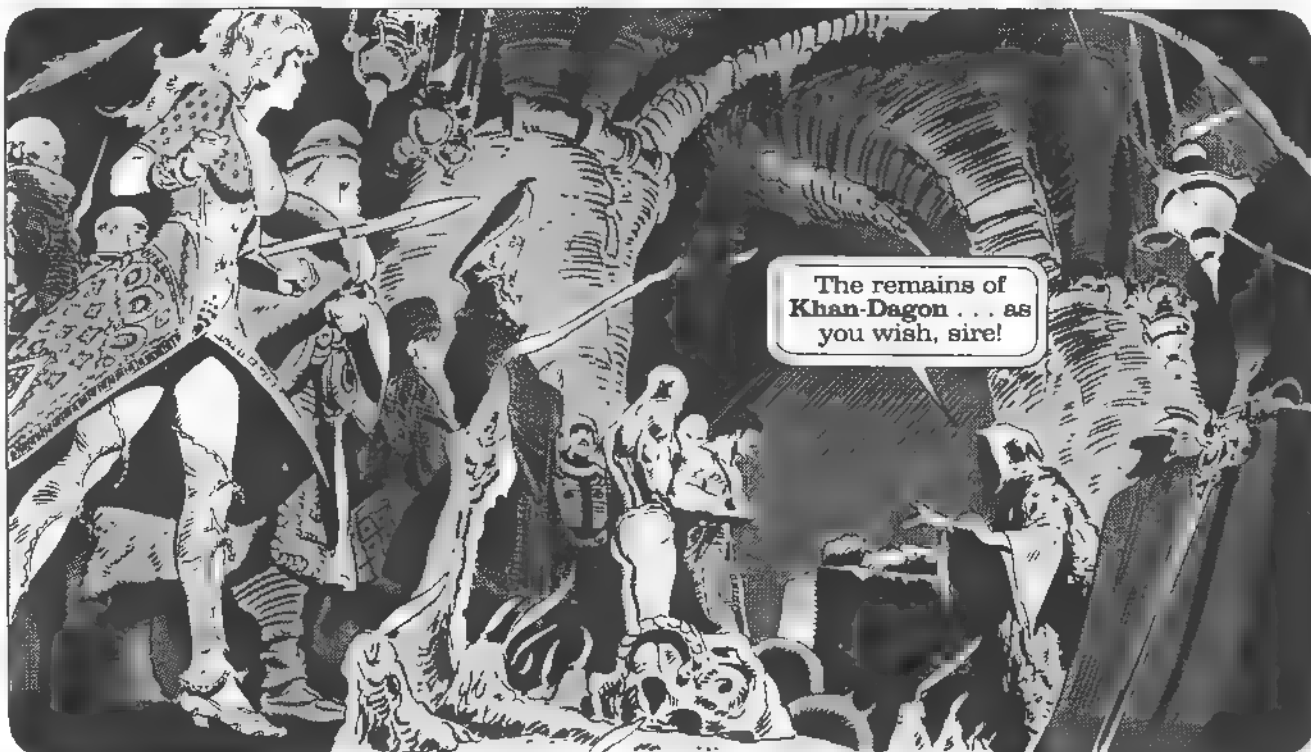


Ghita studies the form of the old magician as the retinue follows Khalia down the great serpentine steps of stone that leads to the grottos beneath the palace. Poor Thenef, she thinks. The court dwarves would do as well at bringing Khan-Dagon back from the dead. What will protect him as his spells go wanting? Chanil will tromp him underfoot.

I remember when I first saw him. He was doing sleight of hand trickery in the performer's circle at Urd dome. I was naked and but a girl dancing for the few drakis that were tossed at us by the bumpkins. Then if the gods had any power beyond supplying their priests with plumage and earthly treasure, I'd surely pray to them for your deliverance.



The remains of Khan-Dagon . . . as you wish, sire!



Death and putrefaction were common sights in the Antediluvian world. Ghita had seen the deadly swath that war had left behind. As a young child she became hardened to dying and dissection. In her ninth year, the stygian plague swept through the village of her birth. Her entire family was left as blackened, bloated corpses. Ghita fled the hovel leaving the bodies of her kin unburied. She never returned. The sight of Khan-Dagon's carcass fixed her mind with visions of the child Ghita, a little girl stumbling across the barren, a brutish landscape.

Thenef,
begin the spells
and incantations
Give life to
the savior of
Alizarr!

Er... my
King—I feel
that this, ah...
rite may be too
difficult for my
meagre skills!

Your wizardry
will be aided by
this ancient Urdian
gemstone

The Eye of
Tammuz! I
recognize it! It
holds the secrets
of the stars

It belonged
to the great
sorcerer
Rahmus.

The gem
cost me seven
of Ghita's skills
to obtain it. The
best of the lot
had two pairs
of breasts

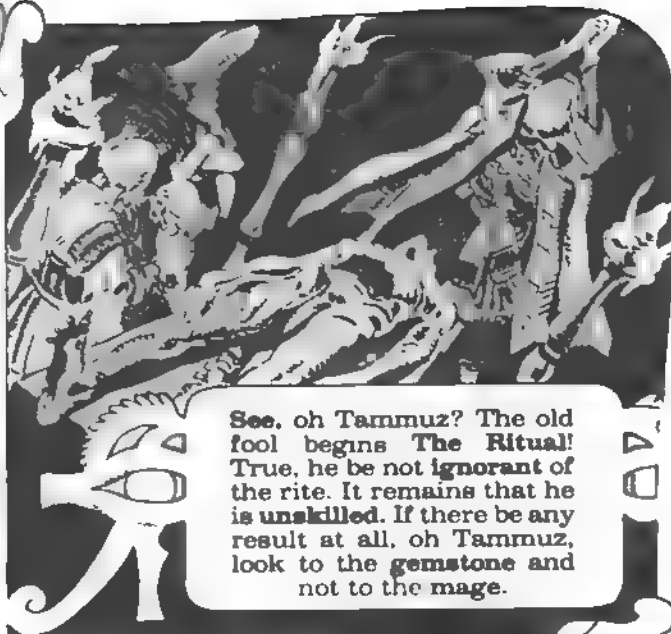
One pair is
enough, m'lord,
if they be full
and proper
formed.

Not enough for
Rahmus. He was
born with two
pairs of arms

I know
well of him. He
often spoke of the
multi-breasted
women of Delzur

Enough talk of women's teats. On with the spells. Here is the gem, Thenef.

As you will, my sovereign.



See, oh Tammuz? The old fool begins The Ritual! True, he be not ignorant of the rite. It remains that he is unskilled. If there be any result at all, oh Tammuz, look to the gemstone and not to the mage.

ZAGORETH ZOMZORR!

NADIR DOMINEO!

INEXTIOOR NEXUSNOM!

Nothing.

Alizarr is lost.

We will be overrun.

The gem! Take the gem and thrust it into the solar plexus of the carcass.

Deep inside! Quickly, Thenef!

Thenef, have you lost your hearing?

I cannot...! The pestilence the rot the-

Give me the stone!

An eerie glow surrounds the jewel . . .

In the name . . .



. . . as Ghita briefly holds the gem above the corpse

. . . of the sisters of . . .

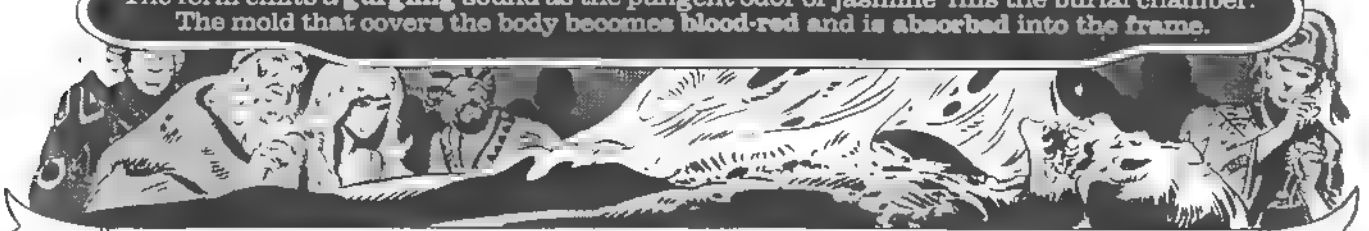


. . . and then plunges it deep into the fetid mass!

. . . Alizarr!



The form emits a gurgling sound as the pungent odor of jasmine fills the burial chamber. The mold that covers the body becomes blood-red and is absorbed into the frame.



the room. The dead warrior's name is chanted from the shadows.


The noisome shape becomes a riot of subtle movement.



Maggots and tanworms take their leave as a raging life force sweeps through bone and sinew.

Tell us, oh Tammuz, what do you think of your handiwork?





Khan-Dagon leaps from the table as he still in command of his troops.

The stinking reptilian pikemen are nipping at our flanks!

Blowmen! Prepare to—!

They

I am naked!

KHAN-DAGON is NAKED!

HAHAHA!

Great Baal! Thenef, I've not seen a body like that in all my travels!

He be hung like an ox. No mistaking him. His dimensions and deeds of valor were legendary



King Khalia orders Kebz and Ghanil to bring him closer to the resurrected general. Alas, gone is Khan-Dagon's taste for battle. He lunges at the woman.



With a murderous sweep of his great arm, the huge warrior strikes Khalia a death blow.



Thenef deals with the crisis in his usual manner: he takes a swig of ginmeed. His first taste of strong drink was early in his youth. His father had been a middlepriest of Paz, a rural Nephthian god. Young Thenef rebelled against a strict upbringing. In his eleventh year he left the temple compound and headed for Alizarr to seek his fortune. Thenef was clever, as was Ghita. They both endured. They were survivors in the black night of history. The Antediluvian age.



The old wizard has never been known for acts of bravery. Nor is he insensitive to Ghita's plight. He is helpless. He knows that Khan-Dagon will ravage her.

and split her asunder'

**THENEF!
HELP ME!**

Away! Khan-Dagon has lost his wife!

The Troll armies will overrun us.

Mother of the gods! Save us!



All flee the death chamber, leaving Thenef the only witness to the sport of Khan-Dagon. Nearby, the body of the king seems afloat in a pool of blood.



I shall ride this mare till sunup!

Thenef

Thenef takes another swig of ginmeed and notes that the royal dagger is still strapped to Khalia's waist.

Bellus' Ishtar'
Nebu' Ishtar' The
avenue of
splendors"

GODS
AND
DEMONS
AND—!

Thenef moves cautiously towards Khalia's body. He pauses and studies Ghita's smiling form. What is the bond that has kept the old wizard and the harlot together?

—ARMIES
OF HELL!
THENEF!!

If he loved her, then he would die for her. He would attack Khan-Dagan with Khalia's dagger... and be crushed into dust... like an insect!

Ghita

No, Thenef is too much the coward. Perhaps he does love her and fears she will laugh at him for exposing it. Sliding the knife to her is as fine their relationship—a strange dependence between two paid wanderers.

Thenef and Ghita, a bizarre combination in a fantastic world. So it would be: A fraudulent wizard and the mistress of a dead king.

Then let it be proclaimed in blood! Ghita drives the royal blade deep into the flesh of the heaving, guttering street as stony, until...

... Khan-Dagon stiffens! A thunderous bellow of rage and anguish echoes through the damp catacombs. The blood streaming from Dagon's body turns into swirling sprays of red dust.



Farewell again, Khan-Dagon! Your second death is far less noble than your first, upon the walls of Alisarr, defending the shrines of Holy Tammuz.



It would be spoken of in time to come: On her back on that stone floor, Ghita of Alisarr received more than the flesh of the mighty warrior-general.

Well done,
Ghita

Thenef . get
this sack of dung
off of me'

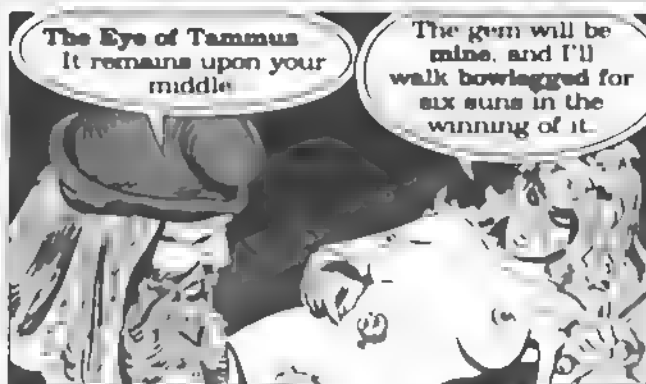


Ghita remains motionless as Thenef removes the miniature carven. She slowly raises her left forearm.

The gem that Ghita so recklessly thrust into Khan-Dagan's corpse rises upon her swelling belly.



I will keep this blade. It feels good in my hand.



The Eye of Tammus
It remains upon your middle

The gem will be mine, and I'll walk bowlegged for six suns in the winning of it.



By the fates, Thenef, he was swollen like a horse's wad

We must quickly leave this place. The Trolls are running through the streets above us



They will slaughter us all in the name of Nergal!

Khalia's troops may

Forget the armies of Alizarr



Without strong command they will have quit the city to save their own necks. We must do the same. Mind you, wizard, we will be on our own!

A good blade and our wits are the only things we can count on!



Thenef, old friend, we are in for a fight to save our skins. We must arm ourselves.

The warriors who owned these weapons are waiting in their tombs — to use them again in the afterlife

But perhaps we will not have to use them. Khalia had a tunnel dug to a hidden arm outside the city's walls. Its entrance is here in the catacombs!

The old wizard. What you will, and with a she-panther at your side. But don't follow me now. Faith, the hell in the tunnels beneath the city streets of Amarr.

ZINCOR AND THE FEMPIRE

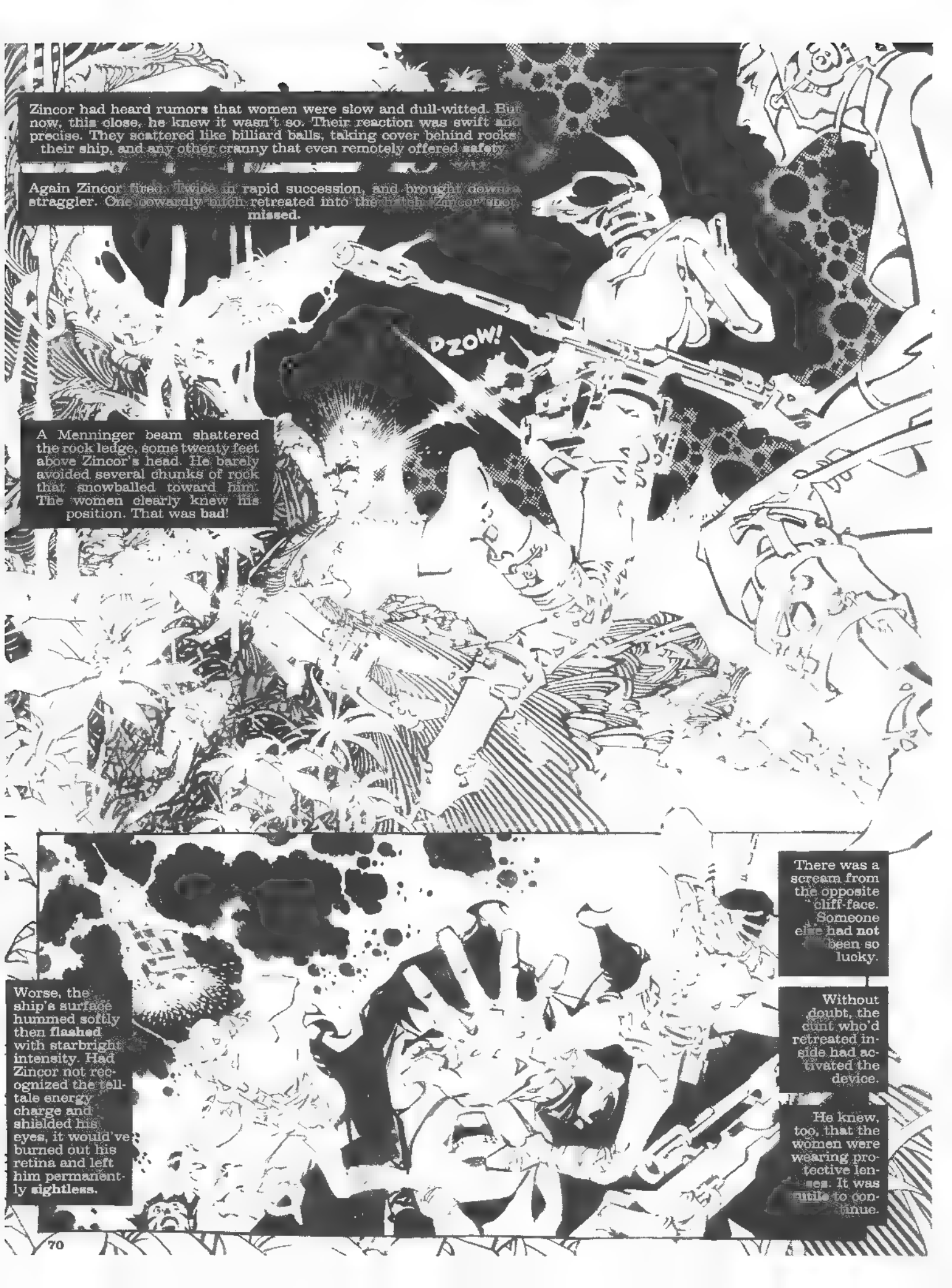
The canyon was desolately quiet. In the brown clay basin, past the ultraviolet rocks, a warship glistened brilliantly, complimenting the reflected rays of the afternoon's ochre sun, silent after its long voyage halfway around a world.

Hidden in the lush crimson foliage not far away, a cluster of men nervously snapped back the bolts of their rifles. The weapons, clearly non-regulation, appropriated from the stilled unfortunates of a hundred forgotten battles, were leveled but not really aimed at the warship . . . which was clearly Fempire!

Suddenly, the vessel's hatch opened, and the women passed through. Six of them, cautiously at first. They were armed with standard issue Menningers. Short-range handguns were strapped against their thighs.

At this distance, Zincor had no easy shot. He selected one of the women in the forefront, and centered the crosshairs somewhere just below her left breast. He waited a moment, until he was sure, then slowly squeezed the trigger.

ZAK!



Zincor had heard rumors that women were slow and dull-witted. But now, this close, he knew it wasn't so. Their reaction was swift and precise. They scattered like billiard balls, taking cover behind rocks, their ship, and any other cranny that even remotely offered safety.

Again Zincor fired, twice in rapid succession, and brought down a straggler. One cowardly bitch retreated into the bush. Zincor then missed.


A Menninger beam shattered the rock ledge, some twenty feet above Zincor's head. He barely avoided several chunks of rock that snowballed toward him. The women clearly knew his position. That was bad!

There was a scream from the opposite cliff-face. Someone else had not been so lucky.

Without doubt, the cunt who'd retreated inside had activated the device.

He knew, too, that the women were wearing protective lenses. It was futile to continue.

Worse, the ship's surface hummed softly then flashed with starbright intensity. Had Zincor not recognized the tell-tale energy charge and shielded his eyes, it would've burned out his retina and left him permanently sightless.



Behind him, a pit yawned deep and black. Zincor crawled on his belly and slithered into the hole, where, he knew, he would find other survivors of the aborted raid.

Zincor knew the caves. As a kid he went spelunking in their bowels. To anyone else they were a hopeless maze of dark, winding tunnels without end. To him, they were a passage to safety, sunlight and the other side of the canyon.

Made it! And with my rifle intact! But what about the others? At least one poor bastard is laying in the basin of that dust bowl.

Zincor! You're alive! I thought that last Menninger had cooked your meat for sure!

Well, boy . . . you've had your first taste of womankind. Whaddya think?

Not at all what I expected. After all the jokes and stories told by "those who remember," I didn't think they'd look so human!

Meanwhile, Commander Jill Alpha of the Fempire warship smoldered with unchecked fury.

It's too quiet up there. The bastards have probably fled back into the hills!

I can't answer that, Marta. But I do know that womankind is going to exterminate the hmp pigs who call themselves men, once and for all!

I'll give a three day pass to every woman who brings me back a man's severed dork!

We've got to search the dogs out and cut them down. This is the last bastion of male chauvinism in the Fempire and I won't have it said that my squadron couldn't clean it out!

I don't like it! They were waiting for us. They knew we were coming! How?

Waving the others forward, she led the long, arduous climb up the craggy cliffside toward the plateau where, she was sure, the men had skittered like jackrabbits.

It was long past nightfall. In the distance, Zincor could hear the cries of mutant animals. The women had made camp atop the plateau. Two were sleeping, two acted as sentries. From the tree top, he had an unobstructed view.


There was a chance he could pick off all four before they could reach their Menninger Beams. But it was a long-shot at best. If he missed, or was too slow, they'd blast him from his perch.

His primitive rifle was no match for their advanced armaments. But if he could get hold of one of their weapons, the situation would be radically altered. He gripped the binoculars strap firmly and swung it till he'd built sufficient momentum.

Then he let go.

Did you hear that, Liz?

Probably just a small animal. Check it out. But be careful!



Zincor waited until the feminine warrior was deep enough into the woods some two hundred meters beyond the encampment. Stealthily, he moved behind her. His hands were sweating—he was damned if he knew why—and he was afraid the knife would slip from his fingers.

When he was perhaps two meters from this strange female creature that had, up until now, always been little more than a legend to him, he was both fascinated and repelled. It confused him.

He wished that he could watch her, observe her, study her, like a specimen under a microscope. Those who remembered spoke leeringly about women's bodies, always with a tinge of desire.

As they squirmed, wrestled, and rolled, Zincor noticed certain things: the softness of her hands as they fought his, the smell of her small, unrestrained breasts, her legs straddling his, her breath, warm and panting. This was a woman, for godsakes! A cunt!

Then . . . a twig snapped beneath his feet. The girl spun suddenly and Zincor was upon her. But she twisted, and the knife struck empty air!

And he knew, intuitively, that this was the first time she'd ever touched a man.

Zincor's fingers clawed at her clothes and yanked. When her breasts spilled out, he felt his body lurch involuntarily. He knew he should kill her—if she could stir him, like this, she was dangerous—but he couldn't. Not now!

Her body responded to his movements, timidly at first, then more openly. Then, suddenly, there was no more resistance, only mounting desire.

Eventually she took control, her hips swayed to an ever accelerating rhythm.

Later, when he was spent, she collapsed on top of him and remained pressed there, shaking and sobbing for several seconds, before rolling onto the ground, alongside her enemy!

He was aware not of the woman, but of the gun ... a mini-Menninger, less powerful than the larger model, but fatal at this range. He jerked to the left, and howled as the beam grazed his shoulder.

Flitty prick bastard! What have you done to her?

BOOP!

He was wounded! The humiliation hurt worse than the pain. A bitch had snuck up and shot him! How could he have been so stupid?

He paused, listening for sounds of pursuit. There were none, yet, but it wouldn't be long before they took up the chase. He scurried like a squirrel, deeper into the woods.

Though he didn't know her name, Marta Beta had been his first woman-lover. She slipped into what remained of her clothes, feeling flustered, embarrassed, and a bit excited, confronted by the accusing stares of Sara Delta.

Did he rape you?

"Yes" Marta said, not because it was true, but because it was against Fempire law for woman to mate with man. All breeding was by artificial insemination. Even the sperm used was a synthetic, imitation fluid, not the real thing.

We will have justice! We'll find that animal! And when he dies, it will be slowly, in excruciating pain. You will have his balls to wear around your neck!

It wasn't exactly what Marta had in mind. Now, her appetite whetted, desire still stirring within her, she knew they could be put to better use.


When Zincor returned to the camp wounded, his eyes downcast in shame, he sensed that his brothers knew what had happened. He could read it in their cold, hateful stares. They regarded him as diseased carrion.

Maybe next time we tell you the cunts are dangerous, you'll listen!

Fool! How could you?

How could you let her contaminate you? See what your weakness brought you? One less weapon and a charred shoulder!





The man turned. Zincor ran his tongue over his split lip and tasted blood. "Son of a bitch," he said under his breath as he angrily flung himself forward, driving his shoulders behind the man's stance.

You're jealous because you've never had a good fuck!

One spectator whistled. Another laughed.

There's no point in continuing this. Your folly will bring its own punishments, Zincor.

Or its own rewards!

Those bastards are somewhere in this forest. Menningers ready! We'll burn them out!

No! You can't--!

Marta?

There was some suspicion that what happened to you wasn't completely involuntary. Only your torn clothes substantiated your story. Please don't give us cause for further doubt!

Back at the Fempire on campaign, the women, all except Marta, raised their weapons level with the woods.

The target points formed a quadrangle. All expected that the men would be trapped somewhere inside the burning forest once the wind fanned the flames to hellish intensity.

Marta felt the cold stares of her commander and her sisters. Slowly she raised her own Menninger ... and fired. Her body shook with silent sobs, her vision obscured by the dampness of her choked-back tears. Her shot went wild.

But the timberland was dry. The fire spread faster than a whore's legs. Flame licked the sky like demon tongues climaxing in frantic ecstasy.

Even from where Marta stood, she could feel the heat.



Black, billowing smoke, so thick it seemed impenetrable, whooshed upwards, clashing with the yellow-orange light for dominion of the sky. The heat was hellish. Zinco heard a crackling, like crumpled cellophane, moving closer, growing louder.

Crazy sluts! They... they're trying to burn us out!

Quick! To the tunnel! We'll make our way under the forest, and come up behind them!

And suddenly he saw it... The ominous, towering hell-beast!


Poor things are terrified. I can't blame them!

The beast, a mutant, didn't understand what was happening. Yet, it knew danger and the fear of death, and would, the men knew, charge anything that moved!

From somewhere behind him Zinco heard the crack of a rifle. He saw the beast explode in a thousand pieces of blood-drenched gore!

BOOM!

They raced on, without looking back, yet acutely aware that the fire was gaining on them.



Zincor was the first to reach the tunnel shaft.

A fallen tree! It... It's blocking the entrance!

Push, you suckers!

One of the larger mute beasts must've knocked it over!

We... we'll never be able to move it in time!

Pushed up like pallbearers, faces compressed with strain. But... how much they pushed, the tree wouldn't budge.

And then, as if exhausted by the struggle, the stump yielded. Zincor barely had time to leap from its path.

One of the elders, however, whose reflexes were less quick, disappeared and was squashed beneath it.

Forget him, Zincor! Enoch is gone! Into the hole with you before the fire claims you, too!

Zincor felt slimy, greased with sweat, filth and guilt. His skin was parched and he coughed and writhed violently as smoke filled his lungs.

He ran, barely able to distinguish the way, until he could run no more. And then he, like the others, collapsed, surrounded by the safety of the dark, damp earth.

Still think the women aren't treacherous, boy?


Fucking cunts! I'll see every one of them in hell!

How... how did this war get started?

'Bout time you asked, boy!

"Simply put... there was a time when the battle of the sexes was merely an expression. Men ruled, and forced women to live under some fairly horrendous conditions. The damage to intersexual relationships was irreparable. Then one day, it just sort of erupted into open warfare."

"God knows how... but the women won and the Fem-pire was established."



"Because artificial insemination had long been a reality, the cunts figured that we men were no longer a necessary part of society. They no longer needed us to perpetuate the race. Indeed, without us, only female children could be born. And that is exactly the way they wanted it!"

"You were among the last of the males born, boy I daresay we won't see another like you for awhile!"

"Some men escaped and some were exiled to primitive planetary outposts. The women proved as strong and intelligent as their male counterparts, but they feared that men would one day try to reclaim their previous status . . . so they continue to conduct periodic purges designed to wipe out small packs like our own, and prevent us from becoming a threat!"

So the stories of female inferiority are untrue?

They're merely myths to salve the egos of the defeated, boy! We made women our enemies! We brought all this upon ourselves! But it's too late to do anything different, so we go on fighting as we always have . . .

... And they go right on killing us!

Morning light shined down on the hideousness that had been the woods. The fire had burned itself out, finding nothing more to feed on, leaving charred, blackened ruins and the charcoaled remains of animals, vegetables and minerals.

Nothing stirred among the ashes, and the women who retreated to the warship to wait out the inferno, returned to the desolate plateau to search for . . . **bodies!**

They shuffled through the embers seeking some confirmation that the flames had accomplished their intended purpose. It would, they knew, take **days** to excavate the remains thoroughly. Yet, deep inside, Commander Jill Alpha **knew** that the men had **escaped!**

The men looked like desert rats as they scaled the face of the cliff, hoping to surprise the women from behind. If they failed, they'd be caught in a crossfire... from the plateau above and the warship below.

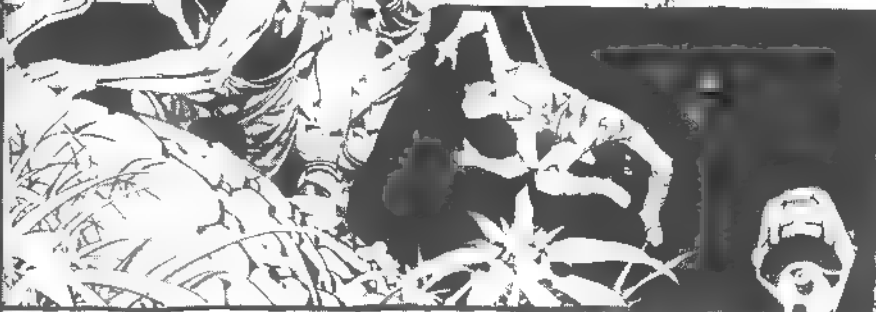
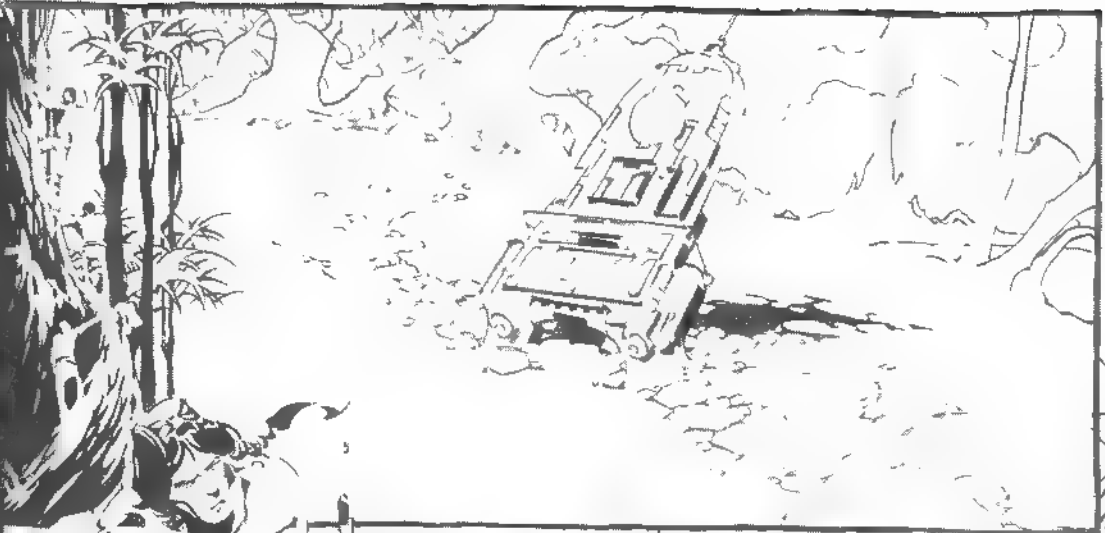
It was a desperate ploy. But they were desperate. The fire had consumed their provisions. To obtain more meant crossing the canyon, leaving them open for an ambush similar to the one they had perpetrated upon the women yesterday.

As they ascended, an elder grabbed at a jutting rock to haul himself up. It gave under his weight. He clawed at the air, trying frantically to regain his footing before plunging screaming into the basin.

Terror turned Zincor's flesh to ice. The hairs of his back and arms prickled. He hung there, helpless, suspended. The shrieking echo faded and died. For a long time he dared not look up.

When he finally did, he saw what he expected to see. Two women with Menningers, grinning smugly, savoring triumph like a last delicious morsel of food.


For what little consolation it offered him, Marta was not one of them.



And then he saw her. Marta. Alop the plateau behind her sisters. Slowly, deliberately she leveled her rifle... and fired!

BOOO!

AIEEEEE!




I should have expected this, Marta! You ... betraying ... killing your own kind!

My mother told me ... once a man gets his cock into a girl, you may as well put a bullet in her head ... she's ruined!

Out of the corner of her eye, Marta saw the men scramble over the crest, flanking her commander. A multitude of emotions flooded through her. She was happy, aroused, terrified. And she had desperately to take a piss.

Jill knew it was over. Reluctantly, she let her weapon clatter to the ground. And the men knew they had won!




Don't shoot, men! She ... she's on our side!

Marta moved forward, her eyes darting from one man to another. She walked to the brink of the cliff, then, without remorse, aimed at the warship below.

and fired!

The elder forced Jill's hands behind her back and bound them tightly with his belt. The woman winced as it cut into her wrists, but refused, with typical macho bravado, to cry out.




What ... what ... made you do it ... to betray your own kind?

I ... I don't know I should have acted before, when they set the woods on fire. But ... but I was afraid!

Today when I saw those guns pointed at you, I ... I just couldn't let it happen!

I'm glad.




What will they do with her?

That's up to my brothers. If they're smart, maybe they'll try to rehabilitate her.

As you did me?

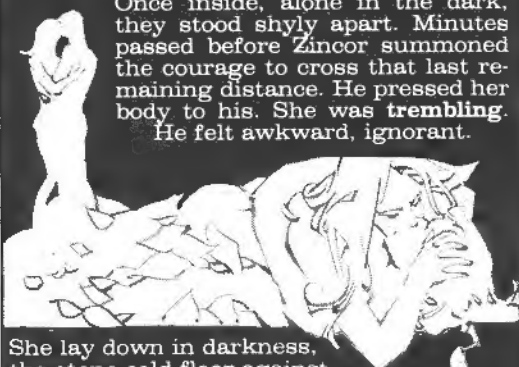
As I did you!



The elder winked. Jill spat contemptuously.

Zincor and Marta vanished into the arteries and tunnels of the canyon cliffs.

Once inside, alone in the dark, they stood shyly apart. Minutes passed before Zincor summoned the courage to cross that last remaining distance. He pressed her body to his. She was trembling. He felt awkward, ignorant.



She lay down in darkness, the stone cold floor against her naked back, the warmth of his body inside her own. The sounds of passion echoed hollowly, hauntingly, like the memory of the way love used to be.

Even after the trail of blood stopped—apparently Jill had made herself a tourniquet—the young lovers continued their desperate hunt. Instinctively, Zincor knew where Jill was headed: An abandoned settlement where the men had once made their living quarters.

Only later . . . much later, did they reluctantly return to the sunlight.

There, the beauty and eagerness of the dark was lost to ugliness . . . and violence.

My god!
It's Kado! His
throat's been
cut!

I . . . I forgot! Jill . . .
she carries a knife strapped to
the inside of her calf. She must
have freed herself . . . then—!

Looks like
she was out, too.
There's a trail of
blood. It leads to
the other side of
the canyon!

It was gutted
during the war but we
were able to adapt it
to our purposes. In
the cathedral basement
we kept our armaments
and radar.

Radar?

Of course!
How else did you think
we knew about the landing
of your ship? We didn't
just happen to be waiting
in ambush, you know.

In the choir loft, Jill aimed her rifle leisurely. If she missed there would be no second chance. The floor beneath her wobbled precariously. The beams which supported it were rotted, weakened by age, the elements and the long-ago war.

I'll check
the front of the
cathedral. Why don't
you slip around
the back . . . !

Zincor moved slowly, carefully, with long pauses between his steps. Jill, he knew, had taken the elder's rifle, and she would be waiting for her opportunity to use it. The youth gripped his own weapon tightly, alert for the slightest sound or motion.

Zincor debated his next move. He seriously considered putting a bullet through the woman's face, ending her misery that way. He even went so far as to raise the rifle ... before changing his mind.

Then, unable to uphold the weight of her body any longer ... it collapsed.

H-Help me!

The girl was dying, that was clear. The knife wound had cost her a lot of blood. Rubble and wood splinters had torn open several other areas of her flesh. There were a few limited medical supplies in the basement, but they wouldn't do much good, Zincor knew, even if he could reach them in time.

She clung to him, not wanting to die alone.

That was in the position in which Marta found them.



The feelings and emotions which Zincor had awakened only a day before were new to her. She didn't understand them completely. Even more foreign to her was this overwhelming hatred, the nameless fear which the sight before her invoked.

She felt hurt, betrayed, and though she had never even heard the word before, jealous. And she did what she did without thinking.



Later, when the heat of the moment had passed, and she realized that she was alone on this dying world, with no hope of ever returning to her sisters, she would regret her action.

And when she felt the first stirrings within her belly, she went a little mad, trying to imagine how she could ever deliver a child ... alone! It wouldn't survive the birth, of course. Neither would she.



But in the meantime, she wondered, would it be male ... or female?

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ever seen!

I've got news for you,
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fartsucking hordes aren't
after the precious natural
gases found only in the
digestive tracks of
Earthly human beings!

They're
not?

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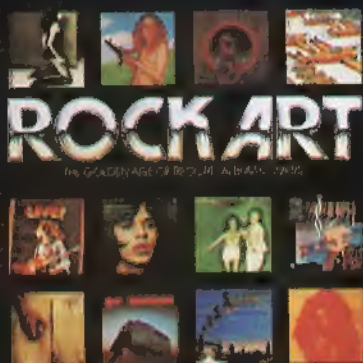
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